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MPs fight freeze

MPs are pressing the government to extend winter fuel payments, worth £200, to severely disabled people.

 The House of Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee, comprising MPs from all the main parties, made the call in a new report, *Fuel Poverty*,* in September. At present, the payments are only made to people over 60 who get them regardless of need.

The call comes as disability campaigners branded as "insulting" a new extension of the payments to older people who move to other parts of Europe. Even tropical areas like the French territories of Guadeloupe and Martinique are covered.

Disability Now is calling for the payments to be extended to severely disabled people of working age on the middle or higher rate of the care component of Disability Living

Allowance (DLA), or the higher rate of the mobility component of the allowance.

DN estimates that extending the winter fuel payments to 1.7 million of these people would cost about £340m a year, compared to the £1.7bn paid to 11.5 million pensioners last year.

The committee took evidence from DN that payments should be extended. The report says: "The winter fuel payments has been of benefit to pensioners. We urge the government to look at extending this to other vulnerable groups. For example, there is a powerful case for extending the winter fuel payments to disabled people whose condition requires extra spending on heating."

DN submitted evidence based on a survey of 1,800

readers who said they could not afford to keep warm in the winter.

Labour MP Dr Roger Berry, a member of the committee and prominent disability campaigner, said: "This was a unanimous recommendation of the all party select committee. It is another weapon in the campaign."

DN editor, Mary Wilkinson, said: "I'm really pleased that the committee accepted our arguments, based upon the real experiences of disabled people, who now face a third cold winter since we began our campaign."

Ann Robinson, chair of the consumer group energywatch, said: "If the government is serious about tackling fuel poverty amongst this group, they need to act now."

Meanwhile, the government



said it was forced by European regulations to extend payments to people moving abroad. This will benefit about 30,000 people at a cost of up to £10m a year.

Ms Wilkinson said this was a "slap in the face for severely disabled people."

Dr Berry will ask for a Commons adjournment debate on the campaign, which is

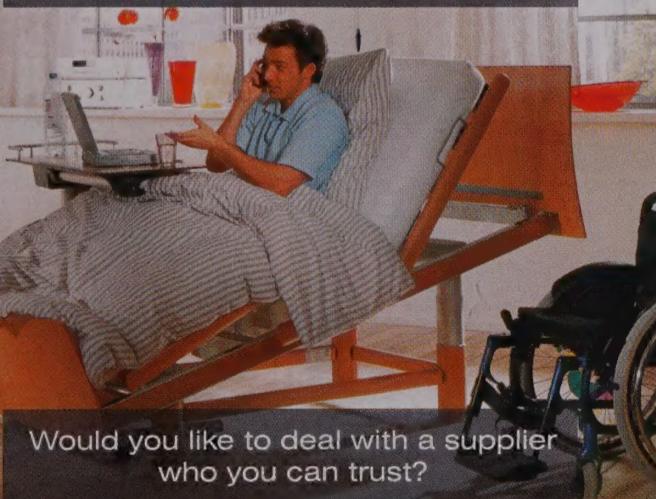
already backed by 23 organisations, 165 MPs and the Disability Rights Commission.

A government spokesperson said its position had "not changed" and it would not extend the payments. Other benefits like DLA could help with heating costs, she claimed.

* www.parliament.uk/commons/selcom/t&ihome.htm

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Dressed for success

Posters featuring disabled children dressed up for their dream jobs are appearing on London Underground to publicise a survey by disability charity Scope.

Three-year-old Nathan Pharris, pictured on DN's front cover in a policeman's outfit, is among the youngsters appearing with the headline: "Don't feel like going to work? We do!"

The posters run until 4 October and aim to get the public to complete a web survey into attitudes about working with disabled people, as part of a campaign to increase job opportunities for disabled people.

To take part, log on to <http://www.scope.org.uk/work/> or contact the Scope campaigns department on 020 7619 7245.

Meanwhile, the government has claimed it has narrowed the poverty gap for people with disabilities by bringing greater numbers into work (see page 3). Photo by Partick Harrison.

Court conflict

Ten learning disabled people are facing a High Court battle with the social care regulator for the right to have their homes reclassified as supported living rather than residential care.

The north-west charity Alternative Futures (AF) and ten service users are seeking a judicial review of the failure of the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) and Sefton Council to deregister the three small homes.

Without deregistration, the properties will remain residential homes, the clients will not have the security of assured tenancies and they will be unable to claim housing benefit.

AF has appealed to other charities to help with its possible £100,000 court costs.* A judge will decide this month whether to allow a judicial review.

AF is concerned that the NCSC last month refused to deregister another north-west home in a similar position

because the service users had high support needs.

If the AF case fails, it could have huge implications for residential homes deregistered by other councils since 1984.

Some of their tenants could lose their assured tenancies and have to pay back years of housing benefit, according to AF.

Steve Cullen, AF's managing director, said the NCSC's stance was "completely confusing". He said: "It is extremely important that people with learning disabilities are recognised as being capable of having a tenancy and enjoying the rights of citizenship that tenancies offer them."

Sefton Council and the NCSC declined to comment for legal reasons, but the NCSC said it was "very keen to support the appropriate development of supported accommodation" and has deregistered ten other north-west homes.

* Contact Steve Cullen, tel: 0151 489 5501

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www.disabilitynow.org.uk

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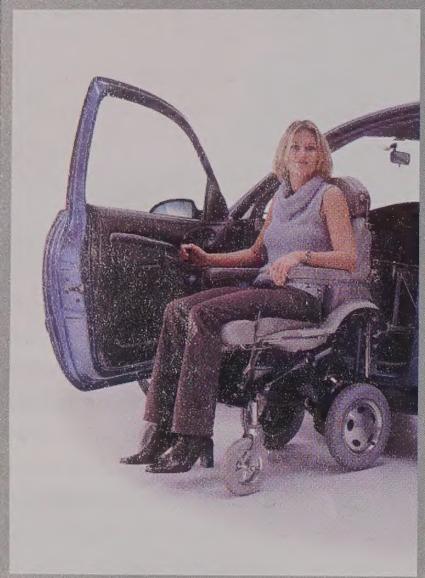
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Guideline worries

Government guidelines intended to lead to fairer charges for home care services for disabled and older people are instead causing widespread confusion.

One local authority, Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC), is increasing its maximum charges for those with more than £19,000 savings from £44 to £280 a week.

But others have raised their maximum charges for disabled and older people with higher levels of savings by just a few pounds.

Health minister Jacqui Smith issued the guidance last

November in a bid to eliminate the "huge variations" in charges between councils across England and Wales.

All local authorities must introduce their new charges by next April, but are already no longer able to take earnings into account in charging for the services.

A BCC spokeswoman defended its new charges. "Some will be paying more, but a great majority will be paying a lot less," she said.

"I don't think Bucks is particularly unusual or out of step with other counties."

But Richard Holmes, chair of the Coalition On Charging, an umbrella organisation of about 200 charities, said: "A very confused picture is emerging.

"It seems to be becoming more clear that differences are occurring that were not anticipated. It clearly isn't fair."

The coalition plans to present its evidence to the Department of Health (DoH).

A DoH spokesman said the government did not yet know what local authorities were charging. He said: "If there is huge variation, it would be a concern."

Blunkett snub

Home Secretary David Blunkett has refused to meet with disabled people to discuss demands for an immediate relaxation of the law on the medicinal use of natural cannabis.

Mr Blunkett was asked to meet with *DN* editor Mary Wilkinson, along with disabled cannabis users, after 96 per cent of those responding to a *DN* survey said they wanted the drug legalised immediately (*DN*, August).

Responding for Mr Blunkett, Bob Ainsworth, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Home Office, said a rethink of the law was impossible before the results of clinical trials, which aim to cre-

ate cannabis based medicines, are announced at the end of the year. These medicines may not be available before 2004.

Labour MP and cannabis campaigner Paul Flynn described the government's refusal to act quickly as "cowardly". He said: "Disabled people who need this drug for pain relief should be able to get it from their doctor in pure form now."

The government recently announced that natural cannabis is to be downgraded from a class B to a class C drug but that its use will remain illegal.

Ms Wilkinson said that Mr Blunkett's response was "disappointing".

Poor show, Tony

Disability campaigners have dismissed government claims that it has made solid progress in closing the poverty gap for disabled people.

In its annual report on tackling poverty, *Opportunity for All*,* the government says that an additional 4.5 per cent of disabled people have found employment, but campaigners want to know why one in two disabled people of working age are still unemployed.

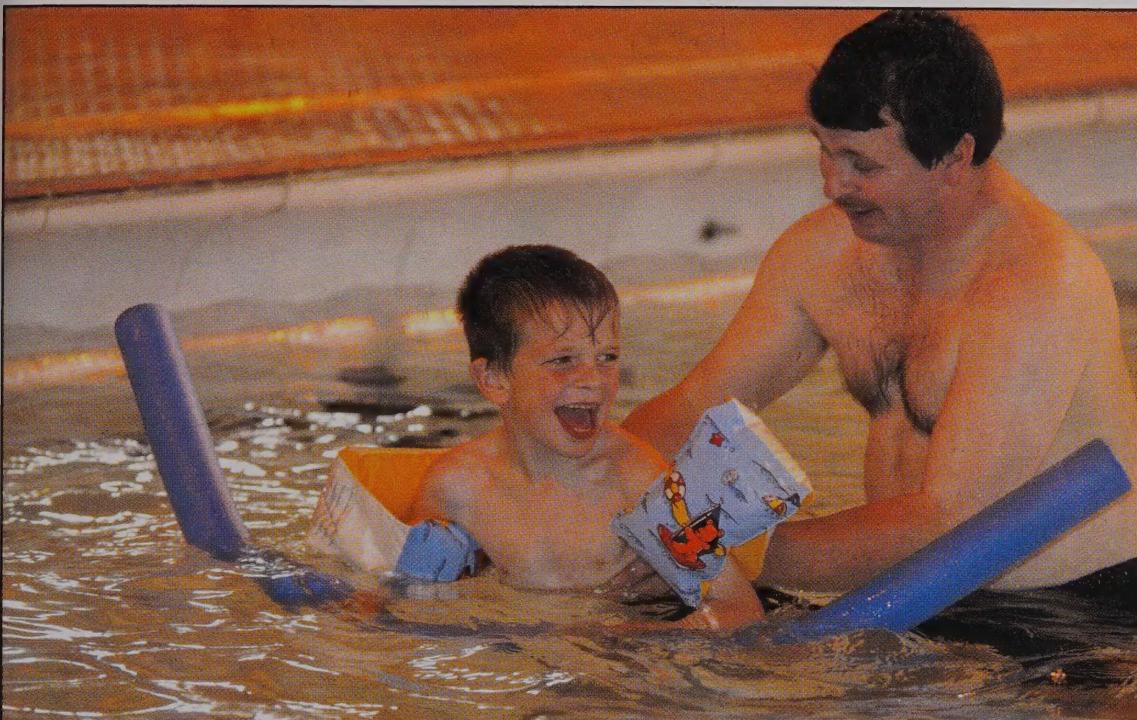
The employment rate among disabled people has risen faster than that of other people of working age, but remains at 48

per cent compared to 74.6 per cent among the overall working age population.

Ian Charlesworth, director of disability employment charity Shaw Trust, said: "Any small percentage rise does little to rectify the barriers of discrimination and prejudice which exclude them from the labour market."

A spokesman for the Royal National Institute of the Blind, said: "Our most recent research shows the proportion of blind and partially sighted people in work remains at 75 per cent and hasn't changed in ten years."

* www.dwp.gov.uk



Have a go: More than 200 disabled children from across Wales took part in the country's first ever Multi Sport Camp for disabled children at Pencoed Comprehensive School, Bridgend in late August. It was organised by the local council and Disability Sport Cymru.

In brief

Remploy growth

Remploy, the UK's largest employer of disabled people, has expanded for the first time in a decade.

The company saw its profit margin grow by five per cent to £53.7m during 2001-2002. It helped 2,162 people into unsubsidised jobs, three times as many as in the previous year.

Stroke campaign

The Stroke Association is launching a new campaign to highlight that three quarters of people with strokes are still not receiving life saving care. The charity estimates that 15 people die unnecessarily every day because they are not treated in a stroke unit.

A national petition is being organised to improve services. For a free information pack, call 020 7566 1508 e-mail petition@stroke.org.uk

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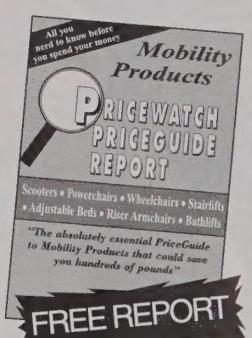
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Bay shame



A supermarket parked an open-sided lorry across half of its disabled parking bays so it could hold a trailer sale of cheap products.

The Safeway store in Walsall blocked off the bays throughout a weekend in early August and failed to provide any alternative spaces.

DN reader Michael Ainge, from Walsall, who saw the trailer, said: "This completely sends the wrong message."

Safeway bosses have now apologised for the incident.

A spokesman said: "In the past, they might have done it. Now that we've picked up on what has been taking place, the guidance will be communicated to all store managers that they cannot use disabled parking bays for trailers."

It follows a similar incident, reported in last month's DN, in which an Asda branch turned disabled bays into a mini-garden centre.

Meanwhile, members of the Baywatch scheme, which is aimed at tackling disabled parking bay abuse, are to devise standards of good and outstanding practice for supermarkets.

And representatives of Asda, Safeway, Sainsbury's and Tesco will meet Baywatch members on 7 October to explain how they have improved procedures since an undercover survey in June found that nearly a quarter of their bays were being used by people without disabled parking badges.

Baywatch members have also sent a costed proposal for a pilot project to test ways of cutting abuse in supermarkets to the Department of Transport.

Death watch

An expert on abuse and disability has launched a bid to discover how many disabled people are dying in suspicious circumstances.

Margaret Kennedy, a trainer and consultant who is partially deaf, believes that "unnatural deaths" of disabled people are frequently covered up.

Prodisca, the training and consultancy service she helps run, is to collect examples of cases of disabled people who have been killed through neglect, violence or "assisted deaths"**.

Kennedy said: "We are not taking abuse seriously, and the end result of not taking it seri-

ously for disabled people is death. We cannot just sweep it under the carpet."

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has welcomed her efforts.

A DRC spokesman said: "If there are a lot of people who are disabled who die suspiciously, we would be interested in those figures."

Meanwhile, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, along with the training and consultancy organisation Triangle, have produced a series of new symbols to help disabled children communicate.

The *How It Is* images** are partly designed to allow children with communication difficulties who are being abused to ask for help.

They also fill other gaps in the existing vocabulary of symbols by helping children express their needs and feelings about issues like safety, personal care and sexuality.

* Anyone with details of suspicious deaths of disabled people can contact Margaret Kennedy in confidence by e-mailing mk@emkay-disab.demon.co.uk

** Download images and guidance notes free from www.howitis.org.uk

Wheels surveyed

A major survey of wheelchair services in England was launched in September, aimed at identifying and spreading good practice in provision. Results are expected in two years' time.

The Wheelchair Service Mapping Project, run by the charity emPOWER, is to investigate procedures in all 151 services in England. The project, funded by the Department of

Health and managed by the Limbless Association, promises to take a much-needed "bottom-up" approach to identifying where services need improving.

Health Minister Jacqui Smith welcomed the project. She said: "The findings will help us to identify good practices, so that these can be built upon to improve the service provided to those who rely on this vital service."



School is cool: James Herneman, six, responds to a flashcard with a hand signal for "stop". He was among pupils taking lessons at Heathermount, The Learning Centre, in Berkshire, a school for autistic children. It has been saved from a threatened closure by new owners The Disabilities Trust.

Seeking support

Disabled refugees and asylum seekers are finding themselves isolated in Britain without proper support from social services, a study claims.

Squabbling between the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) and other service providers over their responsibilities is leaving some disabled refugees without personal care for long periods, according to the report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. *

It found that service providers were ignorant of disabled people's needs and entitlements, often placing them in unsuitable housing, such as flats above ground-floor level or far away from friends and family.

And disabled refugees were not being informed about benefits and services. The study revealed that one Vietnamese

man had lived in Britain 22 years but was not told he was entitled to Disability Living Allowance.

No official figures exist for the numbers of disabled refugee and asylum seekers in Britain, but 44 refugee community groups and disabled people's organisations surveyed in the study identified 5,312 such people known to them.

Nick Hardwick, chief executive of the Refugee Council, said: "It is extremely worrying that people are not getting critical support and help because of a lack of understanding about entitlements."

A Home Office spokeswoman said NASS assessed every application on its own merit and would consider the issues raised by the report.

* For a free summary: www.jrf.org.uk

Scotland gets hip

A £4m cash boost to cut waiting times for hip and knee surgery in Scotland over the next six months has been announced. It is the biggest NHS investment in Scotland.

The money will allow around 500 NHS patients, who have waited up to a year for hip and knee replacements, to have their operations in private hospitals.

The National Waiting Times Unit has allocated the money, using the private sector, to ensure that no-one will have to wait more than nine months for such an operation.

Orthopaedic waiting times in Scotland are amongst the worst in the NHS, which carries out 8,000 hip and knee replacements every year.

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Ad fab: John Grooms residents, (left to right) Natasha Dipple, Sarah Horner and Sharon Gibbs, showed off adverts designed by residents as part of local disability awareness campaigns in North London and Essex, which the charity may make national next year.

Strategy to stop suicide

Manufacturers of over-the-counter pain killers will be asked to print helpline numbers on packaging as part of a new government drive to reduce suicides.

The National Suicide Prevention Strategy aims to reduce suicides in England by at least 20 per cent by 2010.

Young men are a key target. Suicide is the most common cause of death among

men under the age of 35.

The strategy will include work to monitor non-fatal self-harm and research into getting information about mental health over to young men. It will also involve reducing the availability of suicide methods, promote safer prescribing of drugs, and help local services identify suicide "hot spots".

The National Institute for

Mental Health in England will be responsible for implementing the strategy and will also promote the employment of people with mental health problems. Unemployment can be a factor in suicide. It will also promote more research into suicide.

Health Minister, Jacqui Smith, said: "Suicide is devastating and on average a person dies every two hours from it."

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Derrick Bonfield of Dunstable



Care codes

The first codes of practice for social care workers and their employers have been published by the industry's independent regulators.

An estimated 1.2 million social care workers in England, such as social workers, care assistants and care home managers, are expected to comply with the standards. They include the need to treat clients as individuals and not exploit them.

The charity Mind said: "The standards should go some way to enhance the status of social care and eliminate some of the variations in the quality of services."

Workers who fail to meet the

standards could be struck off a new social care register that will be launched next year.

The General Social Care Council (GSCC) plans to start registering an estimated 80,000 qualified social workers in April. Other social care workers will be admitted to the register later.

Separate bodies will administer the same codes of practice in the rest of the UK.

But the GSCC admitted that problems in the Criminal Records Bureau, which will check whether new entrants have a criminal past, could delay its launch. It also admitted it could take ten years to admit all care workers to the register.

Cleaner victorious

A cleaner with a learning disability has won £17,000 after a tribunal found he was unfairly dismissed from his job at a premiership football ground.

Anthony Brazil's job at Fulham Football Ground ended in September 2001 when the firm, Prestige Commercial Cleaning Services, took over a cleaning contract from the firm United Response, which pro-

vides jobs for people with learning disabilities.

The Disability Rights Commission took the case to the London Central Employment Tribunal on his behalf.

The company was ordered to pay Mr Brazil for hurt feelings, loss of income and unfair dismissal. Peter Shepherd, operations director at the company, said it intended to appeal.

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Prejudice lives on

Disabled people face verbal abuse, bullying and social rejection in their day-to-day lives, a government report has found.

Prejudice, such as the assumption that disabled people cannot talk or think for themselves, remains rife, according to research carried out for the Department of Work and Pensions. However, overt acts of discrimination are less common than 20 years ago.

The study *Disabled For Life?* reveals that the dominant images of disability remain

people in wheelchairs, blind people or those with obvious physical impairments.

A significant number of the 2,000 disabled and non-disabled people questioned felt disability was presented negatively or ignored by the media.

Juliet Tunney, parliamentary liaison officer for disability charity RADAR, said the results were disappointing.

"They amply demonstrate the depth and breadth of prejudice against disabled people,

which is deeply embedded," she said.

Tunney said the chance to interact with disabled people in everyday life was crucial to dispel prejudice.

The study also found that 86 per cent of disabled children attended mainstream schools and the majority said it was a positive experience. But over half left with no qualifications, compared to 28 per cent of non-disabled people.

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AA accolade for Guernsey hotel



AA good hotel: the award-winning Old Government House Hotel

A hotel in Guernsey, outside the remit of the Disability Discrimination Act, has won a prestigious accessibility award.

The Old Government House Hotel, winner of this year's AA Accessible Hotel of the Year, was praised for the positive attitudes of staff and adaptations to an old building.

Hotel manager, Simon Courtenay-Warren, said: "For the independent wheelchair traveller, there's no fuss, no flap. We don't single people out or make them feel different in any way."

The new AA *Disabled Travellers' Guide* is free to members, £4.99 to non-members, tel: 0800 26 20 50, text: 0800 3282 810.

Holiday flight anger

The parents of a boy with cerebral palsy are furious at an international airline which they claim refused to allow him to fly to Thailand for a holiday.

Suzanne and Tom Riddick, from Frome, Somerset, said Thai Airways claimed none of the family's suggestions for providing supported seating for 10-year-old Thomas met international safety regulations.

The family even volunteered to buy the necessary equipment.

Mrs Riddick said the airline failed to come up with a single solution that would have allowed Thomas to fly.

He has flown with his family on many occasions without any problems, she added.

The Riddicks eventually canceled their return flights with

Thai Airways and booked more expensive single flights with Emirates and Malaysia Airlines instead.

On both flights, they used Thomas's own wheelchair insert, which Thai Airways said did not meet regulations.

Mrs Riddick said: "As an international company, surely they should have to supply something to enable children like Thomas to fly."

In a letter to the family, Thai Airways blamed US Federal Aviation Authority regulations and said they were "in no way discriminating against Thomas".

A spokeswoman said: "We are asking our head office to look into this matter and we will respond."

Dying for rights

Many disabled people will die before new rights promised by the government in 1997 become a reality, the head of its disability rights watchdog has said.

Bert Massie, chairman of the Disability Rights Commission (DRC), used September's Trade Union Congress annual conference to lambast the government for delays in extending the Disability Discrimination Act. The DRC had expected a bill extending the Act to appear in the Queen's Speech but was shocked to learn that this is now unlikely (DN August).

Massie said: "The government has agreed these changes but has given no indication when they will introduce legislation. How much longer must disabled people wait?"

"Given the age of many disabled people, they will die before they receive the civil rights we were promised," he said.

The DRC wants a new bill to tighten employment, housing and transport rights and extend the definition of disability to include people diagnosed with cancer or HIV.

In brief

Good work!

Disability job vacancy website www.jobability.com has teamed up with other organisations allowing web links between them and special advice to disabled job-seekers.

One partner organisation www.DisabledGo.com will, for instance, allow people to check out physical access in an area where a job is based.

Food for thought

Cutting out caffeine, alcohol, sugar and chocolate can help get rid of depression and anxiety, a report by mental health charity Mind has found.

The *Food and Mood Self-Help Report* surveyed 200 people with mental health problems. Eighty per cent said changes were beneficial, with a quarter experiencing major improvements. www.foodandmood.org

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Wheelchair workout: Kirsty Stalley, of Catford, tried out accessible equipment at the Bridge Leisure Centre in Bellingham, Lewisham, part of the Inclusive Fitness Initiative. For more information, contact Colin King, tel: 020 8314 6076.

Air traveller's legal bid

A disabled man has begun legal action against the airline Ryanair and the British Airports Authority for charging him £18 every time he uses an airport wheelchair.

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has backed the action by Bob Ross, who has arthritis and cerebral palsy.

Ross, from north London, flies frequently from Stansted Airport in Essex to Perpignan in France.

He said: "Given the painful arthritis, I simply must have a wheelchair at the airport. But every time I take a return flight with Ryanair from Stansted, it has cost me £36 more than other passengers. It is unfair and discriminatory to charge disabled people more to travel."

Ryanair and the British Airports Authority, which runs Stansted, dispute who is responsible for providing and paying for the wheelchairs.

Poverty prevails

Government efforts to end child poverty are failing to help thousands of disabled children, a report has claimed.

The report by national children's charity Barnardo's says it costs three times more to bring up a disabled child than a non-disabled child.

Neera Sharma, principal policy officer at the charity, said: "The government has pledged to end child poverty within a generation. However, there is little evidence from our report to show that their initiatives to date are significantly improving the

lives of the UK's 360,000 disabled children.

"Most poor families do not have a disabled child, but most families with a disabled child do live in poverty."

The report, *Still Missing Out*, is based on in-depth interviews with 17 families. These are representative of thousands of disabled children and their families helped by the charity, said Ms Sharma.

Parents of disabled children are often unemployed. Many struggle to pay for basic things such as bedding and transport.

Parents are confused about the benefits they are entitled to

and there is poor uptake, says the report.

Changes to benefits made by the government, such as increasing the child premium of Income Support and extending the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance to three and four-year-old disabled children, have not had sufficient impact, says the report.

Sharma said the government must set minimum income standards for families of disabled children and launch an easy-to-understand benefits take-up campaign.

£5, tel: 01268 520224.

Building on Part M

A disability charity has welcomed moves to extend access laws to existing buildings.

The government has announced a consultation on Part M of the building regulations covering public and commercial buildings.

These already set out access standards for new buildings. But under a new consultation on the regulations, the government is proposing to extend them to refurbishments and changes in use in existing buildings.

It also wants to bring Part M in line with a new comprehen-

sive British Standard BS 8300 covering all aspects of disability access, which, for example, would give more generous space in accessible loos (see page 17).

The new rules would help a wide range of disabled people in addition to wheelchair users, covering things like audio enhancement and clear signage.

The consultation was issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Chris Leslie, minister responsible for building regulations, said: "These regulations will open up new work and

leisure opportunities for disabled people, for those who suffer from visual or hearing impairments and for people with learning disabilities."

Alun Francis, access development officer at national disability charity RADAR, said: "It appears to give us many of the things we asked for in an earlier consultation. It's a vast improvement, but we need to see what the final document looks like."

www.safety.odpm.gov.uk/bregs/consult/access/index.htm or tel: 0870 122 6236. Closing date 29 November 2002.

Charity cheers

A string of disability charities and personalities have been honoured at this year's UK Charity Awards.

Nick Partridge, chief executive of the AIDS/HIV charity Terrence Higgins Trust, won a lifetime achievement award, while Ivan Corea was personality of the year for his work on Autism Awareness Year.

Other winners in the awards, organised by *Charity Times*, included Julie Spencer Cingoz, chief executive of the British Institute for Brain Injured Children, who was named charity director of the year, and the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, for their website.

Chris Barratt, from mental health charity SANE, was volunteer of the year, while fundraising teenager Michelle Lewis, from Liverpool, won youth volunteer of the year.

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Rise denied

An internationally-renowned expert on autism has dismissed claims that the number of children with the condition has increased over the last 35 years.

Professor Christopher Gillberg told the National Autistic Society's 40th anniversary international conference in London: "I cannot find any evidence that the real basic rate of autism has gone up, that the condition is more common."

He said there were several reasons why it was mistakenly believed that the number of children with autism was increasing, including changes in the criteria used to make a diagnosis and a rise in awareness of the disorder.

Prof Gillberg also said there was no evidence to support

"any link at all" between autism and the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine.

If the MMR vaccine was linked to autism, one would have expected a "very steep rise" in cases after the early 1980s, when MMR use rocketed in Western countries. But there has been no such rise, he said.

Prof Gillberg, professor of child and adolescent psychiatry at the Universities of Gothenburg and London, said his analysis of research over the last 35 years showed that autism was a relatively common disorder.

He said he believed one or two children per thousand had autism and another three to six had other autistic spectrum disorders such as Asperger syndrome.

Heddel bows out

Mencap has become the third major disability charity to announce its chief executive is stepping down.

Fred Heddel, 57, has been chief executive at the charity for 12 years. In that time, Mencap's turnover has risen from less than £20m to over £110m.

The move follows the announcements in July that Richard Brewster is to leave Scope and James Strachan will step down at the Royal

National Institute for Deaf People to become chair of the organisation.

Kate Nash, director of national disability charity RADAR, said: "It will be interesting to see whether these charities want to go the extra mile to do a wide trawl for a disabled person."

"With three charities in the market for new chief executives, that hunt could be all the more challenging for them."



Helping hound: Nicola Dunn and her dog Will attended a special graduation ceremony organised by Dogs for the Disabled in September to celebrate partnerships between dogs and clients.

Anger over missed mental health march

A leading charity has criticised other campaigning groups for cancelling a march to protest at the government's draft Mental Health Bill.

The Mental Health Alliance (MHA), an umbrella organisation of mental health charities, called off the march that was due to take place in central London on 14 September.

The MHA claimed the "mob hysteria" generated by the detention under the Mental Health Act of the man accused of murdering schoolgirls Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman might put marchers' safety at risk. Instead, the MHA will hold a mass lobby of parliament on 23 October.

But Mind, a member of MHA, said it was "deeply dis-

appointed" at the decision and accused the alliance of "pandering to misunderstandings of mental health".

Other campaigners decided to hold their own march in London on 14 September, a decision backed by Mind.

Protesters are concerned at the bill's proposals to expand the grounds for compulsory treatment of people with mental health problems.

A new survey by Mind found that more than one in three people would avoid seeking help from their GP for depression if the bill became law.

Meanwhile, Welsh mental health groups lobbied members of the Welsh Assembly, who were recalled from their summer recess to debate the draft bill.

News review

A round-up of news in the mainstream media from the last few weeks

Guide Dog closures

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association announced it was closing all 15 of its residential training centres, with a possible loss of 150 jobs. It plans to replace residential training with more flexible district teams that can visit guide dog owners in their own homes.

It blamed the decision on an annual income shortfall of £11m.

But it said the plans were not linked to a £20m drop in the value of its reserves.

Cheers Tony!

Former Radio One DJ Tony Blackburn said he would donate his winnings from a celebrity reality TV show to the National Autistic Society (NAS).

Blackburn, who won ITV1's *I'm A Celebrity, Get Me Out Of Here!*, is a friend of former *London Tonight* presenter Fiona Farrell, who has a son with autism.

Granada, which made the show, is donating money from phone calls and text messages sent by voting viewers to charities nominated by the eight contestants. As the winner, Blackburn gets the biggest share.

Heart op hope

A British Heart Foundation study found that operating on people with severe angina could drastically cut further pain, the risk of heart attacks and even death.

University of Edinburgh researchers said the number of people with severe angina symptoms could be halved if they were given urgent invasive treatment.

Embryo testing

A government watchdog has licensed two fertility clinics to test embryos for genetic disorders including Down's syndrome.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority granted licences to clinics in Nottingham and London to carry out aneuploidy screening. The technique allows doctors to check an entire embryo for various genetic conditions, rather than screening for one particular gene.

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Just the job: Eight disabled people celebrated getting jobs with Sandwell Council after being helped into work by a local charity.

Public posts fail to attract

Less than three per cent of people appointed to public bodies last year were disabled, according to a government watchdog.

Dame Rennie Fritchie, commissioner for public appointments, has launched a drive to lift the number of disabled people applying for posts on bodies like NHS committees.

In 2001/02, 101 of about 3,500 people (or 2.9 per cent) appointed or reappointed by government ministers said they were disabled, a slightly higher proportion than the previous year, but the same as in 1999/2000.

Dame Rennie is working with the Cabinet Office and the Department for Work and Pensions to address barriers that might prevent disabled people from applying, such as the effects of payment and expenses on their benefits.

David Colley, chair of the British Council of Disabled People, backed the drive. He said there needed to be more role models, and public bodies should advertise vacancies in places that would encourage disabled people to apply.

*To find out how to apply for public positions, visit www.quango.gov.uk or tel: 0845 000 0040.

In brief

Restraint rights

People with learning disabilities are being given a guide to their rights when physical

Sign of the times

Deaf people are using unqualified sign language interpreters in confidential settings like doctors' visits because of a shortage in qualified signers, a government report has found.

The report, published in August by the Department for Work and Pensions, was written by a team from the University of Durham.

It found there were only 284 qualified British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters available for work across England, Scotland and Wales at

the time of the research in 1999.

Yet more than half of organisations using interpreting services claimed that they provided equality of access for deaf people.

The study, *The Organisation and Provision of British Sign Language/English Interpreters in England, Scotland and Wales*, was based on a survey of interpreters, interpreting agencies, deaf people and other agencies.

One of the researchers, David Brien, said some deaf people might prefer to take a

friend or family member with them to the doctor.

But he added: "There is an extraordinary shortage of interpreters. Deaf people say in many cases that people are being used to interpret who do not have the qualifications required to undertake the task."

Paul Redfern, head of community services at the British Deaf Association, said service providers were too complacent and called for more interpreters to be trained.

www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.htm

Euthanasia – church divided

Nearly a quarter of Church of England clergy believe euthanasia should be legalised, according to a new survey.

About one in five Anglican clergy took part in the survey, conducted on behalf of Cost of Conscience (CC), a think tank representing the "traditional" wing of the Church.

Although 68 per cent of cler-

gy who responded to the survey said euthanasia should not be legalised, 24 per cent disagreed or disagreed strongly with the statement.

The Rev Robbie Low, a parish priest from Hertfordshire and a CC member, said he was "extremely concerned" at the growing influence of the "eugenics lobby – now

disguised as mercy killers".

Rachel Hurst, director of Disability Awareness in Action, said the survey results did not surprise her.

"We are seeing a more and more eugenic society. It's done in the name of alleviation of suffering, but it is actually about who should live and who should die," she said.

children, researchers have said. The report was carried out by the Visual Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research, with backing from the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association.

www.guidedogs.org.uk

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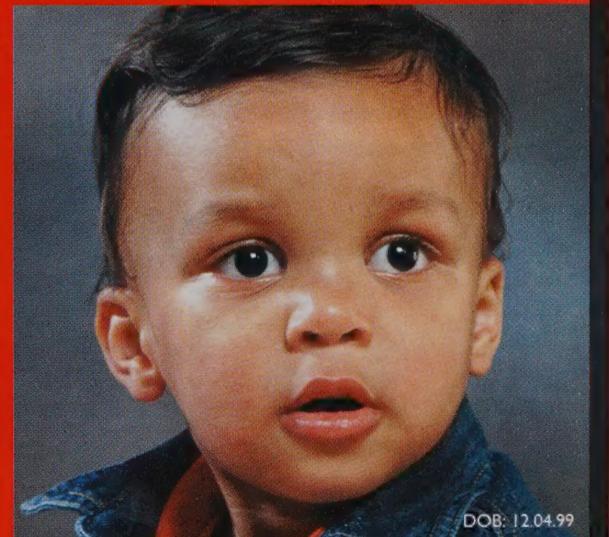
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Fighting pain in vain

Disabled children may not be getting enough pain relief during hospital stays, a new report says.

Medical charity Action Research funded the study which shows that some children receiving drugs for heart conditions and post-operative pain may be suffering more pain than is necessary.

Commonly prescribed medications are tested on adults but not on children, the researchers say.

The lack of clinical evidence on dosage means that doctors

may be erring on the side of caution, leaving children with conditions such as muscle weakness and immune deficiency disorder in pain.

The researchers took more than 1,000 blood tests from 500 children during the study to analyse the effect of the medicines they were receiving.

James McElnay, professor of pharmacy at Belfast's Queen's University, who led the research, said: "Whilst any new drug must undergo extensive testing before being used in adults, there is currently no

obligation for separate trials for children."

He added: "The general lack of anticipated side-effects begs the question as to whether the dosage of pain-relieving preparations could have been increased without risk to patients, and to their benefit."

Dr Mike Child's, a member of the research team and consultant paediatrician at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, said: "Children are getting pain relief, but it may not be adequate. We want to optimise this".

Hopes for treatment

A government consultation could lead to new treatments for motor neurone disease and behavioural problems in children being made available across the NHS.

The treatments include Xaliproden, a drug currently being developed for the fatal condition motor neurone disease (MND) and parent training for treating conduct disorder, which affects about 750,000 children in the UK.

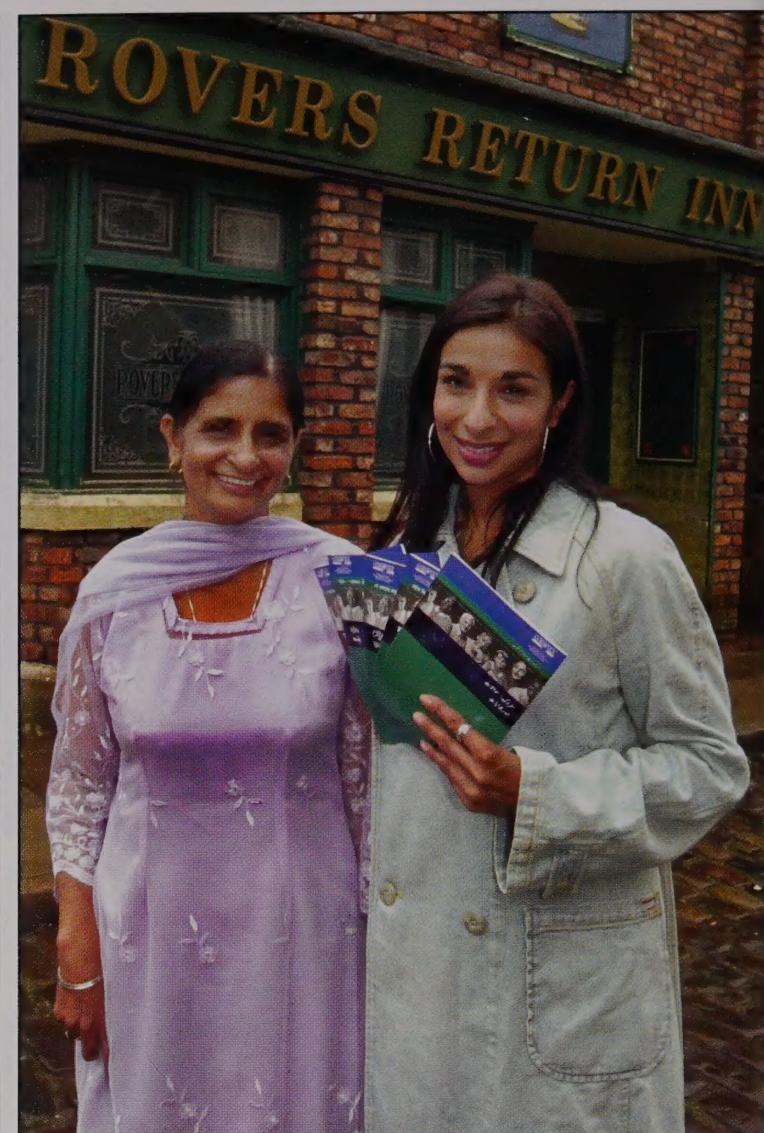
Xaliproden is currently not available and parent training is only available in some parts of the UK. But the government is consulting on whether to refer the treatments for appraisal by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE). If NICE recommends a treatment, health authorities must provide funding.

Alison Morris, campaigns manager at the MND Association, welcomed the move but

warned that there is currently limited information about Xaliproden.

Dinah Morley, deputy director of YoungMinds, also welcomed the move on parent training and said: "We would like to see this kind of support and training available to all parents."

The government is also consulting on three new treatments for psoriasis and a bi-monthly treatment of injections for uncontrolled asthma.



Star appeal: Coronation Street star Shobna Gulati (right) and Avtar Mahil, from Staffordshire, who had a stroke, help launch The Stroke Association's campaign to raise awareness of the increased risk of stroke faced by Asian people in the UK. The charity has translated an information leaflet into five Asian languages. For more information, or to order a copy, telephone: 01604 623933.

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Air rage

DN is backing Phil Friend's campaign to stop airlines damaging and losing wheelchairs. We asked readers whether they had experienced such problems.

John Pring reports

Carwyn Owent's heart sank when he saw his wheelchair and realised that the electric wires had been ripped out and the frame damaged beyond repair.

It wasn't the way he wanted to start his holiday in Orlando, Florida, after arriving on a flight from London.

On at least three other occasions, his wheelchair has been damaged during a flight.

"I always use my back-up chair for holidays, knowing the way these companies are," he says.

Owent flew with MyTravel Airways, the in-house airline of the MyTravel Group (formerly known as Airtours).

MyTravel claims the airline's procedures are "currently OK". Wheelchairs are normally stored in the hold, along with other fragile cargo, as they are on many airlines.

"There have not been a huge amount of cases, enough for us to have to change a procedure that we have in place," a spokeswoman says.

Other airlines also say there is no real problem. Aer Lingus, for example, believes the incidence of damage to wheelchairs is "very low".

So far, more than 30 readers have written to us with their experiences of airlines which have lost or damaged their wheelchairs.

Responses from readers regularly suggest that wheelchairs are damaged on somewhere between 10 and 20 per cent of flights, even more, although

these are not scientific figures.

Our readers' experiences also suggest that airlines are seriously underestimating the scale of the problem, if they even know it exists.

Many readers mention problems with British Airways (BA), although that may be because more readers travel with BA than other airlines.

BA claims that last year it received only 15 claims for compensation from about 400,000 passengers with wheelchairs.

But it is at least trying to address the problem and is currently investigating "how, where and why the damage is occurring".

But the British Air Transport Association (BATA), which represents most British airlines, admits the industry was not aware of the wheelchair problem before leading disability consultant Phil Friend's campaign was launched on the issue.

Bob Preston, BATA's executive officer, has pledged to send our article to his members and ask them for ideas about how to address the problem of loss and damage to wheelchairs. "What is going to be difficult is to know what the actual level is," he says.

He believes the solution could be to introduce "some kind of protective box" for wheelchairs.

Simon Evans, chief executive of the Air Transport Users Council, which represents passengers' interests, says his organisation has received complaints on the subject.

"We would support efforts to



Friend in need: Phil Friend with the wheel of one of his wheelchairs damaged by an airline

encourage airlines to be more considerate to the needs of disabled passengers in handling their wheelchairs. All parties involved need to get together to look at it."

This means airports, baggage handlers and airlines, which have ultimate responsibility for wheelchairs.

A new voluntary code of practice on air travel for disabled people will be published by the government this autumn and will "emphasise the need to handle wheelchairs and other mobility equipment with care".

It has been developed with the help of the UK travel industry and the Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC).

But he admits there are no up-to-date statistics and has asked the campaign to provide further information.

The new code will only be

'I always use my back-up chair for holidays, knowing the way these companies are'

DPTAC will release its own guidance at the same time as the government's code of practice.

A Department for Transport spokesman says the industry has been "taking steps in recent years to ensure the problem is minimised".

voluntary. And there is no sign yet that the industry realises how important and widespread the problem is for disabled people.

*Visit www.disabilitynow.org.uk for a survey form or call DN, tel: 020 7619 7323 or minicom: 020 7619 7332

Helen Mitchell, from Hampshire, had a wheelchair badly damaged during an Aer Lingus flight from Cork to Heathrow last September.

Aer Lingus says it has a "very low incidence of damage to wheelchairs". A spokeswoman says the airline regrets any "inconvenience" caused.

But Mitchell has had wheelchair problems on three other occasions, including flights with Crossair and British Airways.

"Now I will not travel with my new chair. I don't trust them not to trash it," she says.

Fortunately, her company has bought her a cheap chair to travel with.

"If I didn't have that, I would really not want to travel.

"They just treat it as a lost bag. This is not a lost bag, this is my legs."



Labour MP Anne Begg flies between Scotland and London about 100 times a year. Her wheelchair was trashed two years ago on a flight to Aberdeen.

She says that British Airways (BA) was very helpful when she complained, but adds: "I suspect the letters MP after my name had something to do with it."

Four years ago, her chair was left behind after a BA flight from Glasgow to Heathrow.

Although she believes flying is the most convenient form of transport for disabled people, she says a damaged or lost wheelchair is "the equivalent of someone coming off an airplane with their legs broken".



Sue Ferreira, from Cambridgeshire, arrived back at East Midlands Airport after a holiday to discover her wheelchair had been left behind in Cyprus.

She said: "They were less than helpful at the airport. They just treat it as luggage but it is somewhat more important."

It took six days to get the chair back, so she had to go on a family trip to Dublin with a chair borrowed from the Red Cross.

"It is never handled with care. It seems to me that it comes back with another scratch each time. They just need to understand how important they are."



Phil Miller, from Essex, flies frequently and has had "lots" of equipment – including a portable hoist, shower chair and electric wheelchair – damaged by airlines. He says: "The airline staff treat wheelchairs like rubbish and throw them about without a care in the world." Last year, the frame of his chair was broken on a flight to Tenerife. But he has found it impossible to insure his electric wheelchair to take on holiday.

He says: "It is totally laughable that BA say this is only a small problem (DN, August 2002), as I personally know loads of wheelchair users who have had their holidays ruined by airlines trashing their wheelchairs."

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Beating the Oxford blues

When sparkling straight-A student Anastasia Fedotova was rejected by Oxford University, people were stunned. But the 19-year-old Russian is not letting it get her down, finds John Pring

Anastasia Fedotova is still bemused by the acres of newsprint that followed her rejection by Brasenose College.

The media leapt all over her story when it emerged that the profoundly deaf Manchester student, who gained six A-grade A-levels in maths, further maths, chemistry, biology, physics and general studies (and achieved marks of more than 90 per cent in each one), had been rejected by the college.

The university refuses to discuss individual cases, but points to its good practice

an applied maths researcher, Anastasia describes the whole experience as "crazy".

We communicate in writing. She lip-reads, but is more confident in written than spoken English, especially with someone whose lip movements she doesn't know.

Besides, English is her third language, after Russian sign language and Russian. She only started learning English when she was 12 and didn't speak Russian in proper sentences until she was ten.

This is Anastasia's first interview. All the other stories

expected me to be, but I expected myself to be a genius and dazzle them, but I didn't," she says.

One of the Brasenose interviews went well. In the other, she failed to "shine". Both were conducted orally, with the tutors writing anything down that she didn't understand.

However, she says she was so busy reading their lips and making herself understood, that she was unable to concentrate on the content of the interviews.

She has already received several sympathetic e-mails and letters from deaf students at Oxford, who understood the difficulties she faced.

One of the reasons Anastasia is reluctant to shout discrimination is that she believes she is better off in Britain than in Russia. As a deaf student, she says she would not have been able to go to university.

But her mother feels Brasenose failed to spot her daughter's potential, although she says she cannot "formally" accuse the college of discrimination.

She tells me: "It is more complicated with deaf people. She is not a normal pupil."

'She may not be bitter, but there is a good deal of "I'll show them" in her determination to succeed'

guidelines on "admission of students with disabilities".

It also says it had to decide on her application seven months before her A-level results were published.

But she had already gained five A grades (out of five) at AS level and a glowing recommendation from school.

Sitting in the flat in central Manchester which the 19-year-old shares with mother Elena, a maths teacher, and father Sergei,

have been based on telephone conversations with her mother, her MP, her head teacher...

She says the media have been "too heavy" on Oxford. She blames herself for not performing well enough in the university's own written test last December.

After the test, there were two interviews with Brasenose tutors, followed by another with a Christ Church tutor. "I don't know what they



Rising star: Anastasia is still confident she will shine

But Anastasia is anxious not to point an accusing finger. She laughs when I suggest this is because she doesn't want to ruin her chances if she reapplys.

"I am actually a bit worried that it will scare Oxford into discriminating in favour of disabled people," she says. "But I have confidence that I will shine now with my six As behind me."

She displays no bitterness. She just wants another chance to show her true potential.

Having said that, she points to a letter published by *The Independent*, in which the mother of a student

"humiliated" in an Oxford interview 20 years ago, who went on to "academic glory" at a London university, advises her to "cock a snook at Oxford" and let her "undoubtedly successful future career be a continuing thorn in their side".

Anastasia nods her head. She may not be bitter, but there is certainly a good deal of "I'll show them" in her determination to succeed.

And she does wonder whether Brasenose paid too much attention to the "blip" of the written test and not enough to other factors, such as winning the Maths Olympiad in her home region of Yekaterinburg in 1997.

She may reapply to Oxford, or try Cambridge. But it won't be Brasenose.

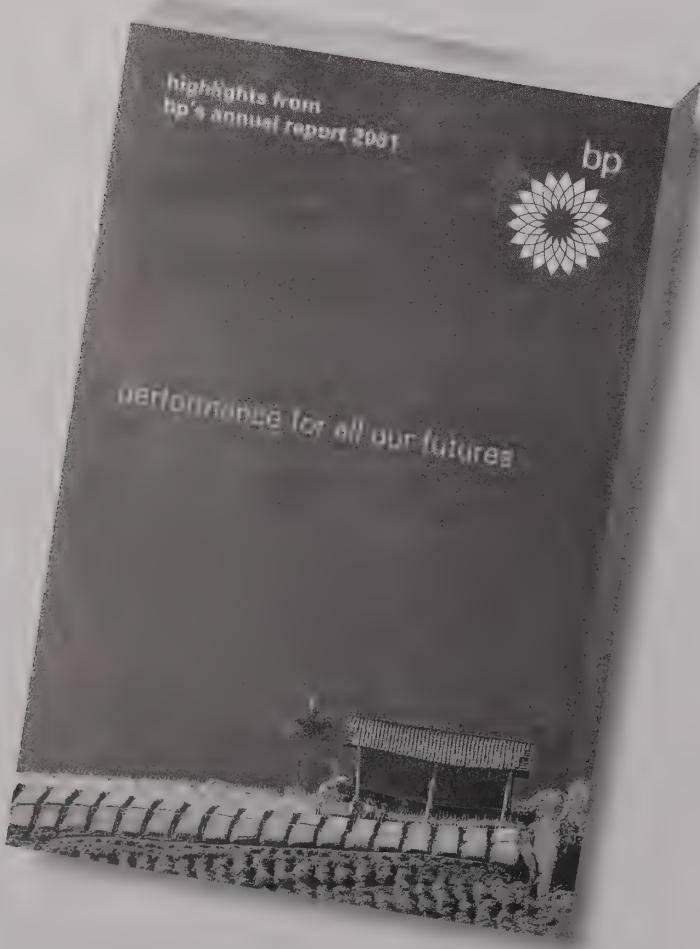
"When I got rejected, I was happy to accept that 'I failed' – made an unfortunate blip. It happens to many good people. Manchester United lost 5-0 to Chelsea..."

She has a well-rounded social life: she supports United, likes running and hanging out with friends, and gets frustrated that she can't chat to other people as easily as she would like because of her hearing impairment. Now she is looking for a job for the next year.

"I need to impress Cambridge or Oxford with a job that involves use of the brain and is paid," she says.

At the end of two-and-a-half hours with Anastasia, it is clear she has a sharp, insightful intellect, common sense, maturity, charm and wit. Surely a perfect candidate for one of our leading universities?

The mystery, of course, is how on earth Brasenose College failed to spot that.



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Hit the road show

The Motor Show, opening in Birmingham in October, comes with more than just new cars. Douglas Campbell gives *DN* readers a preview

Planes, games (and automobiles) are on display at this year's British International Motor Show. Visitors can expect a host of cool features and events, with something to please all the family when they visit the NEC. And that doesn't just mean glitzy new cars!

There's a show within a show with MINI Adventure Live! Audiences will be on the edge of their seats as the new MINI is put through its paces in a display of amazing stunts and manoeuvres.

State-of-the-art electronics company Alpine has promised

to bring boats and planes to the show along with in-car entertainment. The NEC lake will play host to the Sunseeker XS world record-breaking speed boat, while the air space above it has already been reserved for the Alpine-sponsored GoldAir International aerobatic display team and its new Sukhoi SU26 stunt plane.

Formula One fans can experience pit lane thrills on the Shell stand in a wheel change challenge.

And youngsters will have the chance to show their creative skills by painting a range of Daihatsu cars in whatever style they like, while for

those 18 and

older, a "chill-out" zone promises bars and computer games within the action-packed Automania arena.

But if all this excitement gets a bit too much, or you just feel like being pampered, simply drop the kids off at the playcare centre, sponsored by Nissan, and take a break in the Sanctuary, a relaxation zone featuring massage, salad and juice bars. What better way to catch your breath before the journey home?

Chief executive of the Society of Manufacturers and Motor Traders, Christopher Macgowan, says: "Our aim is to give visitors a premier league motor show which will keep them amused all day, for less than half the price of entry to a top flight football match. So

at this year's show, there will be something for everyone, loads of fun things to do and see, better amenities and, of course, a truly international line-up of new cars."



Yeah baby! Austin Powers' favourite vehicle, the Jaguar XK8, will appear at the show. Disabled workers at the Torrington Avenue Remploy factory in Coventry have been taking turns driving the XK8 as a reward for improving productivity.

The British International Motor Show 2002 takes place 23 October-3 November at Birmingham's NEC, with public access from 24 October. Discount tickets for the show are now on sale for those who book in advance at www.motorshow.co.uk. Visitors can save £3 by booking online, with adult tickets priced at £12 for public days. On the door, tickets are priced at £15. For the *Daily Telegraph* preview day on 24 October, tickets cost £25 in advance but £40 on the door – an online saving of more than a third. All discounts are available until midnight on Sunday 13 October, when tickets revert to normal on-the-door prices.

For visitors without access to the internet, tickets are available through the box office ticket line, tel: 0870 906 2002.

All levels of the NEC are accessible to disabled people.

Vehicles displaying blue badges can park near the main entrances. Additional parking is also available in main car parks, along with free shuttle buses that are accessible to wheelchair users. Traffic officers will direct you.

If travelling by train, get off at Birmingham International. From there, access to the NEC is by lift and the bridge-link. Remember – trains may be disrupted at weekends.

DN has five pairs of Motor Show tickets to give away – see page 47.



Vauxhall Mobility will be showing off an adapted Zafira

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Renault Kangoo. 1.4 litre petrol, W reg, August 2000, 13,600 miles, metallic grey, low floor conversion with ramp. £10,750

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Durham becomes no-go area

Durham County Council is to introduce a £2 charge for all vehicles using Saddler Street and Market Place between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Saturday. The charge will come into effect on Tuesday 1 October.

Surprisingly, there is no exemption for disabled motorists and the disabled persons' parking bays are being removed from the Market Place by Durham City Council.

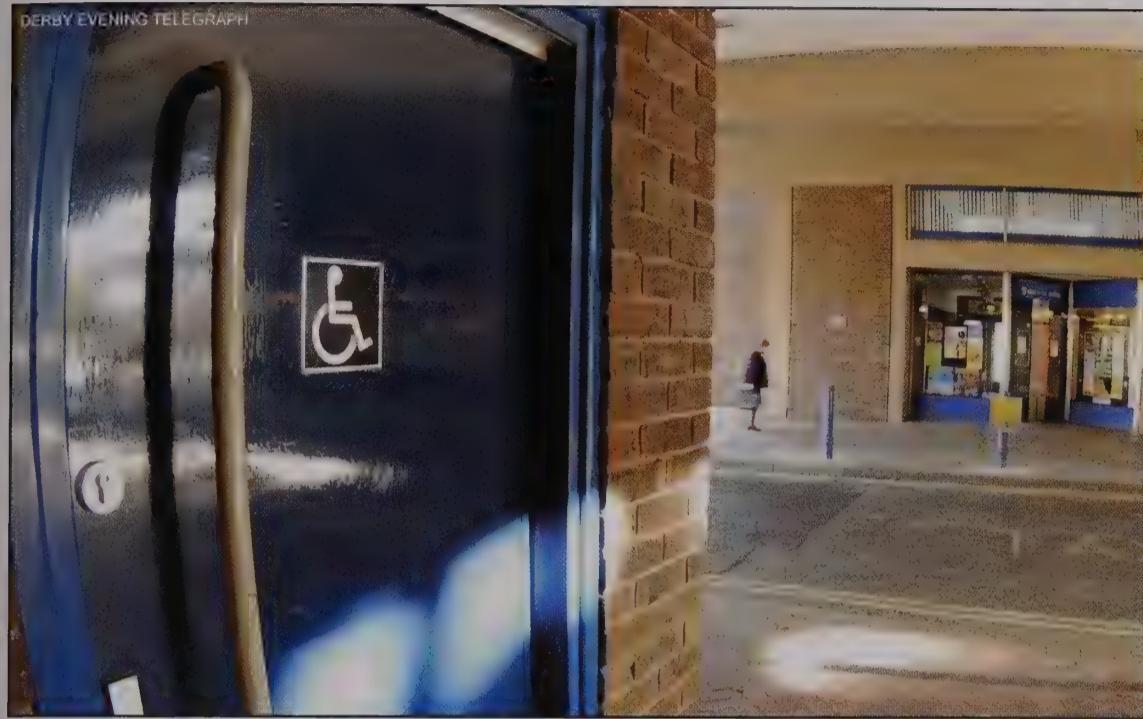
The County Council seems to think that an accessible bus service and some enhancements to the Shopmobility scheme are adequate compensation. As the buses only run every 20 minutes, many disabled people will find themselves sitting in the freezing cold for a long time, especially if the wheelchair space is already occupied when the bus finally turns up. At busy times, extra buses will operate, but these will not be accessible.

Transport Minister Alistair Darling has approved the Durham scheme despite assurances given by his predecessors that a national exemption scheme for disabled motorists would be introduced before congestion charges were initiated outside London.

Do you visit Durham? How will you be affected by these changes? Did the council consult you? Let us know at DN, tel: 020 7619 7323, e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

Toilet story

How do you cope when you're out and about and need to spend a penny? Rod Hermeston lifts the lid on the state of accessible loo provision



Toilet trouble: one of the loos now being locked up in Derby

There's nothing quite like the toilet to provoke blushes and giggles. Unfortunately, embarrassment is the least of disabled people's worries. It is difficult to know where to find an "accessible" public loo and also difficult to be sure that what you find will really meet your needs.

The campaign Is There An Accessible Loo? (ITAAL) has tried to tackle that by producing the *English Directory of Accessible Loos*, with consultancy firm Equal Ability. But money is a constant struggle for ITAAL. Many funding bodies just can't get interested in loos.

Diana Twitchin, chair of trustees at ITAAL, says: "If I was running a thing sending people out for a day's holiday, great, but because I am doing something so undignified in their view, they just can't face up to the issues."

She has now got £4,000 in core funding from Lloyds TSB and money to prepare a second edition of the directory.

Toileting in general gets a low priority from local

authorities as well.

Jolyon Rose, executive director of continence campaign group Incontact, says 300 public toilets close each year.

Yet in a survey of 150,000 people with continence problems last year, Incontact found that 40 per cent of respondents wanted more public toilets.

"Twice as many people said it was the thing most affecting their daily lives compared to other important issues," says Rose.

At present, the law does not force councils to provide public toilets. And it is easy for councils to close loos which do not meet access standards, especially as they know they could be forced to make improvements under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in 2004. This will call for reasonable physical adjustments to premises.

Rose says legislation is needed to force authorities to provide enough loos and that national enforceable standards are needed to cover accessibility, hygiene and monitoring.

Even toilets specifically designated for use by disabled people under the charity RADAR's National Key Scheme are facing trouble. Around 5,000 accessible toilets are now available for disabled people who have a key to open them. Councils run the scheme.

But Derby council has been locking up two of its six key scheme toilets between 6pm and

8am because it says drug users and homeless people have got hold of copied keys and have used the loos either as a shelter for the night or as a place to inject drugs. Cleaning staff pricked by used needles have faced HIV tests. The council is finalising a review of what it can do to reopen them.

Mick Watts, access officer at the city council, says: "It is not just a local problem. I have been talking to colleagues up and down the country."

York council has also confirmed it locks two toilets at

night because of drug taking.

RADAR points out that, until the DDA is effective in forcing provision of accessible loos elsewhere, the key scheme is a lifeline for disabled people. Despite the fact that in 2004, service providers like councils, shops, restaurants, hotels and pubs could be forced to make physical alterations, RADAR says this will not happen overnight and adjustments do not have to be made if unreasonable.

So it may be some time before the dream of Richard Chisnell, director of the British Toilet Association, comes true. He wants to see inclusive loo complexes in towns, catering for all needs.

At present, the quality of accessible public loos – whether run by councils or service providers – can vary greatly.

There are access standards for loos in Part M of the building regulations and these meet most people's needs.

However, Sarah Langton-Lockton, chief executive of the Centre for Accessible Environments, says: "What is often the case now is that people want to provide an accessible WC, but they and the builders don't know what they're doing. They make a stab at it and get it all wrong."

Toilets are unusable for some people if grab rails are in the wrong place and loos are at the wrong height, with insufficient transfer space, she says.

Yet some things may be about to improve. The government has just issued a consultation on

Even the best laid out loo will not meet everyone's needs. Sue Maynard Campbell, managing director of Equal Ability, which provides training in this area, says her company encourages providers to have a variety of accessible loos in larger premises: "There isn't one design that fits all because people are different."

It is depressing to visit venues with three or four identical accessible loos, she says.

But if there are problems with permanent loos, then portable loos for events are in a terrible state. Event organisers cannot be sure what they will get because companies operate a pool system where loos may come from any company that has loos available.

This situation has led Mobility Choice, the organiser of the Mobility Roadshow, to take matters into its own hands.

Jan Gethings, executive director and company secretary, says: "Ramps have been too steep, had a handrail missing or been chewed up. We've taken delivery of 'accessible loos' that we have been unable to use."

The company has now teamed up with the Convenience Company, which provides loos that are "like a toilet at home" and meet Part M.

Mobility Choice now owns a couple of the toilets, which are looked after by the Convenience Company and rented out for the rest of the year. But Mobility Choice is

'When disabled people do not have loos, they are excluded. ...It is time we lost our reticence about these things because they do matter so much'

8am because it says drug users and homeless people have got hold of copied keys and have used the loos either as a shelter for the night or as a place to inject drugs. Cleaning staff pricked by used needles have faced HIV tests. The council is finalising a review of what it can do to reopen them.

Mick Watts, access officer at the city council, says: "It is not just a local problem. I have been talking to colleagues up and down the country."

York council has also confirmed it locks two toilets at

new standards for Part M, which will bring them in line with British Standard BS 8300. This means, for instance, that the standard disabled unisex loo will be bigger. The consultation also says that Part M will apply not just to new buildings but also to major refurbishments of existing buildings and changes in use.

But there is a "get-out" clause, says Langton-Lockton. A facility which complied with Part M before the new revised standards come into force could not be forced into improvements under the DDA for ten years.

guaranteed to get them for the Roadshow. At present, such luxury is a dream for many disabled people.

As Langton-Lockton puts it: "When disabled people do not have loos, they are excluded. They stay at home or they dehydrate themselves, which compromises their health. It is time we lost our reticence about these things because they do matter so much."

For the Directory, priced £14.50, contact ITAAL, tel: 020 8904 8321. Equal Ability, tel: 01924 270335.

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Recent events have taken their toll on Tanni Grey Thompson's good nature. This month, she speaks her mind – and you better listen!

Disability politics were always a bit of a mystery. Like many disabled people, I grew up in a non-disabled world, and have tried to fit in by living what I think is a normal life. But I am not sure that I will ever have one.

I always knew that large scale discrimination went on, but apart from a few odd looks and the compulsory parent dragging their child out of my way in supermarkets, I never really had many issues to deal with. Now, problems seem everywhere.

In the first place, I have become furious about the blatant misuse of orange badges. It never used to bother me – I could always manage from the other side of the car park. But now wide spaces are essential for getting my chair and seven-

month-old daughter Carys out of the car.

I feel like I am turning into an "orange badge fascist" checking the cars parked in the spaces. I can even pinpoint the time I first became obsessed. I was parking in our local town when a very angry older woman approached my car, banged on my window and yelled: "So what's wrong with you?"

As I had pulled into the last available space, this woman was perfectly able to stomp over to me and demand that I move for her. I maintained some sanity and explained that I was a wheelchair user,

'I have become furious about the blatant misuse of orange badges'

and managed to return her question by asking how she managed to qualify. She admitted that she was only borrowing the badge. She was getting items for the owner of the badge. The free parking was her compensation for being so kind and wonderful.

It's good to know that progress is being made on the Baywatch campaign – I don't know how I would keep my sanity otherwise!

Another problem is that my husband Ian and I have been

trying to make our home more accessible. For the first six months, I had to listen to salesmen insult me with comments like: "If you go away and think about it, you will find that this is what you want". If my husband can barely figure out what I want, then how can a salesman who has known me less than ten minutes? I tried to think of every reason why I was being treated like this and the only answer I could come up with was that I have a disability.

My patience at such treatment must be wearing thin because at a recent function a woman asked how I managed to go to the toilet and bath.

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Cup glory

England's learning disability football team (right) have been crowned world champions, after beating Holland in front of a crowd of nearly 25,000.

Goals from Brian Wheeldon and captain Paul Walters (front row, third from left) were enough to clinch a closely-fought 2-1 victory and win the cup for the first time.

The final took place at the Yokohama Stadium in Japan, the same venue used for June's World Cup final between Brazil and Germany.

England scored 42 goals during the tournament, conceding only two, and saw off teams including Portugal and Russia to reach the final on 25 August.

England striker Rudi Hall

(front row, second from right) won the tournament's Golden Boot award, after scoring 11 goals, and Brian Wheeldon was named Most Valuable Player.

England manager Lyndon Lynch said afterwards: "Our performance today highlights what can be achieved by players with a learning disability if they are given the opportunity to play at the highest level."

England's cerebral palsy team weren't quite as successful at the European Championships in Ukraine, losing all five group games.

But the English amputee team had reached the semi-final stages of their world championships in Russia, as DN went to press.



Morris major

Cornwall's David Morris has become the world blind golf champion.

Morris, twice a winner of the English Blind Golf Association's Order of Merit, won the World Champion (Totally Blind) title over 36 holes at the World Blind Golf Championships in Winnipeg, Canada.

He said: "Winning an event of this stature against so many of the world's top blind golfers is a real honour."

Australia's Peter Robinson successfully defended his title as world champion in the visually impaired category.

In all, 57 blind and visually impaired golfers from the USA, Great Britain, Germany, Australia and Japan took part in the event on 20 and 21 August.

UK gold

Great Britain's Cathy Mitton won gold at the world disabled table-tennis championships in Taipei in August.

Mitton triumphed in the final of the women's wheelchair singles in her class, beating Genevieve Clot of France 3-1 in the final.

Britain took three other medals, with James Rawson winning bronze in his men's singles class; Rawson and Neil Robinson claiming silver in their men's team class; and Mitton and Lynne Riding winning silver in their women's team class.

The championships featured 319 players from 45 countries.



Brits beaten

Great Britain's men's wheelchair basketball team narrowly failed to halt the USA's march to a third consecutive world championship.

Despite opening up an 8-0 lead early in the first quarter, GB were 39-32 behind by the end of the first half, against a team they had beaten in the group stages. The British team – with a starting line-up of Simon Munn (pictured left), Jon Pollock, Ade Adepitan and Colin Price – were down but not out.

They first narrowed the US lead to 42-40 and then inched ahead 54-52 by the end of the third period.

But they were never able to pull away, and a late flourish saw the USA claim a 74-61 victory.

Pollock and Munn were GB's leading scorers, with 18 points each, while Price and Adepitan each scored 10.

A crowd of more than 6,000 saw the final in Kitakyushu in Japan on 1 September.

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no nonsense vehicle conversions

It can be tough for couples when one partner needs to care for the other. Stick with it, says Ronni Sloan

When my husband Patrick had a stroke, at the age of 53 on Boxing Day 1996, life was to change forever. I was suddenly thrust into the world of the carer, and quickly discovered that I would have to be the spokeswoman, financier, organiser and mainstay of the family.

Suddenly I had to be there for my husband, to cater for his every need, from simple things like cutting his food to helping him wash and dress. A trip to the local shops took half-an-hour to organise, and "Is there wheelchair access, disabled parking, disabled toilets?" were to become keywords in our planning. This applies to all our trips out, whether to have a meal in a restaurant or visit friends. We now cannot visit the majority of places we used to, including family, as the toilet is upstairs or there are steps to the front door, etc.

Before the stroke, Patrick had anxiety and depression as well as vascular disease of the legs. Now the need for us to be together is very much more important, especially as Patrick has come to depend totally on me day and night.

Along with all these day-to-day problems comes the fact

'Love will shine through'



In sickness and in health: Ronni and Patrick have stuck together

that we have both had to get used to being in each other's company practically all the time. There are days when it seems like a major event just to find some time of my own; yet other days we enjoy each other's company like we used to before things changed so drastically.

I have arthritis and other debilitating illnesses, making my caring role more difficult, but I find myself putting my problems to one side and feel as if I can't afford to be ill. I have difficulty walking any distance, and we have resorted to making use of Shopmobility when we visit Gloucester.

I had a major operation in

1998. I had to have my bowel removed as I had ulcerative colitis, and had to spend ten days in hospital. We tried to get Patrick help while I was in hospital, and we got absolutely none from anyone. We couldn't get a home help; we couldn't get anyone to come in the morning, do meals, etc; and, in the end, our 13-year-old daughter had to take time off school to help her dad. To cap it all, we had a call from the school attendance officer, threatening to take us to court if we kept her off school. In the

end it didn't go that far, but we still got no help. When I did arrive home, we had to rely on friends visiting to bring us meals and, for a while, help me in and out of the bath.

But over the years we have become used to our new lifestyle. We have had to move from our house to a bungalow. We have experienced verbal abuse and terrorism tactics from local children and youths,

'There are days when it seems like a major event just to find some time of my own; yet other days we enjoy each other's company like we used to'

to the point that we have had to move to another bungalow. This time we are living in an area especially for elderly, disabled and ill people and our life has become much more calm and pleasant.

We have had some help over the years from social services, including handrails in the last bungalow we lived in and a shower stool, and we are now waiting to get a wet-floor shower. We are also getting an appliance that will help Patrick stand and get out of a chair.

Our personal relationship has changed drastically. I am now the main decision maker but try to involve Patrick as much as possible. We

sometimes bicker, both suffering from frustration at the problems we face and, on occasion, resentment at being unable to lead a "normal" life.

Some of our happiest times have been doing simple things like having lunch in the local supermarket café, which has level access and caters nicely for wheelchair users. Thanks to Motability and our Citroen Picasso, we travel into the

country and sit by the canal when the weather is good to have a picnic lunch. We have spent many hours enjoying nature, watching the odd barge or ducks go by, reflecting on the good times in life and deciding that, despite all our problems, we have a lot to be thankful for.

I firmly believe that if love is there in the first instance, then it will shine through no matter how hard life becomes. Our bodies may change and become twisted or broken with age and illness, but the two people who fell in love with each other all those years ago still exist, and as the old adage goes – love conquers all.

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Letters to the Editor

Send your letters to the editor
Mary Wilkinson, Disability Now,
6 Market Road, London N7 9PW,
minicom: 020 7619 7332,
fax: 020 7619 7331,
e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



How to take up table tennis

Following your profile of Sue Giron, Commonwealth Games gold medallist in table tennis (DN, September), I have received a number of enquiries from disabled people interested in taking up table tennis. English Table Tennis Association is working with clubs across the country in place of a programme at disabled sports facilities, from

beginner to advanced, and as social events.

The sessions are led by a qualified coach and give the disabled player the option to play at open club sessions with able bodied players or with disabled players.

There are 33 clubs involved with the programme from Okehampton to Liverpool to Newcastle to Brighton. By April 2003, it is hoped to

double this number.

If anyone would like more information about the clubs or would like to know more about playing table tennis, please contact me.

Judy Rogers
National development officer
English Table Tennis Association
Queensbury House
Havelock Road, Hastings,
E.Sussex TN34 1HF
Tel: 01424 722525

No to legalising cannabis

I have friends involved with cannabis trials who rely on cannabis for pain relief. But pills are not producing smoke, which is inhaled.

I am allergic to cannabis. After inhaling smoke recently, I couldn't balance for a couple of weeks. The other way it affects me – and not only me – involves mental symptoms.

Holistic remedies offer pain relief too. We could throw our weight behind more testing and

greater use of these remedies.

Even if you say we want pills not spliffs, the effect will be more smoking and more stuff in the air of buildings.

I have impairments which already disable me. Am I now to be further excluded from social life by the wider use and availability of cannabis? The uncritical espousal of cannabis by the disabled lobby is shocking to me.

Ann Torode (e-mail)

Disgraceful

I listened with interest to your item about able bodied people muscling in on disabled sporting events (DN, June).

It is disgraceful that the Guinness Book of Records has the guile to create the Blindfold Landspeed Record. Why have they not got the guts to dismiss this phoneyism out of hand and let Ken Moss's original Blind Land Speed Record stand?

Philip Boothman

Heswall, Wirral

Addictive drug for children

From talking to parents and meeting professionals who are looking at the causes, not the symptoms, of behavioural problems, I am horrified to find that Ritalin, a psychiatric drug designed to affect the central nervous system, is being used widely in children as young as three for the so-called Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD/ADHD).

This drug is addictive, retards growth in children, increases blood pressure, suppresses appetite, can cause seizures and depression, adversely affects cognitive ability and has other side effects. There are no studies showing the long-term effects on children. The manufacturers and the Medical Control Agency do not recommend its use in people under the age of 18.

Many professionals describe ADD/ADHD as inattention and hyperactivity – a behavioural problem, not a disease. There are many studies from the UK and overseas showing that the condition can be resolved by the use of modified diets, nutritional supplements and/or proper behavioural therapy. These are very effective, very low cost and leave the child able to progress to a long and useful life.

Unchecked, the condition can cause severe stress to parents, but that is no excuse to drug children.

I have submitted a petition to the Scottish Parliament asking it to investigate the effects of ritalin on children. If you would like to support this, please write to Malcolm Chisholm, Minister for Health and Community Care, Scottish Parliament, King George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH99 1SP.

James A Mackie, Alloa, Scotland

Funding needed for cycling roadshow

In your coverage of cycling roadshows (DN, June), you gave the impression that all our roadshows are special needs events.

As a result, we keep encountering people who are hoping to see and try out a wide range of special needs cycles. We do our best, but these are not primarily special needs events.

It would be wonderful to put an extra disability cycling roadshow unit into operation, but this needs considerable outside finance and no one

seems willing to pay for it.

Even better, and what we all badly need, is a national special needs bike try-out centre.

In the meantime, I must regretfully point out that I am not in a position to give one to one advice on cycling. But I am happy to send an up-to-date 4-page factsheet on cycling and special needs in return for a 50p stamp to cover postage/handling.

Jim McGurn
Company of Cyclists
7 Coda Avenue, York YO23 2SE
Tel: 01904 778080

PC pulse

by Dan Batten

Face the facts

DN has been accused of being ruled by its publishers, Scope, on a site criticising the charity. The site, created by Dr Laurence Clark, a trustee of the British Council of Disabled People, claims that DN "is owned and controlled by Scope". Owned, yes. Editorially controlled, no.

Didn't Dr Clark twig that when he lifted some figures from a DN employment survey of charities last year – not exactly flattering about Scope – to back up one of his "arguments" against the charity?

And did he not see that DN's coverage of Scope's 50th anniversary in May included an article from Scope's biographer Chris Davies and a critical piece by Glynn Vernon?

Try reading DN regularly, Dr Clark, to get a sense of balance – and always check your facts.

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Have you ever looked at a snowy peak and dreamed of working your way down it on skis? With the right adaptive equipment and help, your dream could come true, says Dan Batten

Uphill Ski Club

Nowadays, it's as cool to go on your travels to a snow coated resort as it is to bask in the sun for a fortnight. Pretty it may be, but how many of us, when faced with an

expanse of the white stuff, would attempt to negotiate it on skis or some other contraption? And after all, disabled people don't ski, do they?

Well, think again – as many

do. There are two main groups in the UK that lead the way in what is called "adaptive skiing", the British Ski Club for the Disabled (BSCD) and the Uphill Ski Club. Both run trips and

schools for people with various disabilities to North American resorts such as Winter Park and Breckenridge. The Uphill Ski Club has its own adaptive ski school in the Cairngorms.

The Back-Up Trust is another organisation that runs ski courses exclusively for people with spinal cord injuries.

So how do you start?

Although support from someone with good "snow feet" can be all that's needed, there are a few ingenious additional bits of kit that can set you on your way down the slippery slope of your choice if more substantial support is required. It's worth trying these items before you buy and getting plenty of lessons with expert tutors under your belt as well as getting your fitness levels up. Kit and ski trips aren't cheap, so getting the right gear and plenty

of practice on dry slopes is essential. "There are many different types of ski equipment out there and it's a matter of trying things out and seeing what works best for you," says Sarah Orr, course co-ordinator at the Back-Up Trust.

First up is a device known as a "four-track", which is normally used by skiers who have trouble with lateral movement or who have balance or walking difficulties. The four-track comprises two regular skis and two "outrigger", forearm crutches with ski tips on their bases. Alternatively, you can dump the outriggers in favour of support in human form, known as a "walker". Your skis are secured together by a metal "ski bra", an elasticated bungee cord which keeps the skis closer together and reduces your chances of veering

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It's snow easy: walkers can help you on your way

freedom

off in unwanted directions.

A scaled-down version of the four-track is the "three-track", favoured by skiers with one leg stronger than the other, or just one leg. This simple set-up has one ski and two outriggers.

Both these methods rely on you having use of your legs, so what if you don't? Three other ingenious "sit-ski" devices provide ways to sit and ski. First, there is the "ski-kart", which is used by people with reduced arm and hand movement. It can be a rather rigid, bulky item, built for support rather than speed. Another is the "bi-ski", made up of two skis cut asymmetrically and mounted on a rigid seat. To get moving you can use either outriggers fitted to the bi-ski or a hand-held pair.

If that sounds rather secure, there is another option for the real daredevils out there – the "mono-ski". This is used after a lot of practice on a bi-ski, and takes a lot of balance, strength and skill to control. It features a single ski with a moulded seat rather like a toboggan attached to it. "The fit of the seat should be as tight as possible for a mono or bi-ski, and is a vital factor in learning how to control the sit-ski," says Sarah. Hand-held outriggers are the only method of control available, so lots of concentration and a firm grip are needed to keep moving safely.

Once you've practised and got used to your equipment, chances are you'll want to get on some snow. But before you go booking yourself on a trip, you need to take care of everyone's least favourite holiday chore, finding appropriate insurance to cover you in the event of any mishaps. Unfortunately, disabled people can find themselves paying out more than non-disabled travellers. Sarah stresses the value of shopping around, as some companies are a bit more enlightened than others. Trailfinders (Ski booking line, tel: 0845 050 5900, website: www.trailfinders.co.uk) offers good deals that do not penalise disabled people.

So now you're ready to go, but how long will it take for you to find your snow legs? For some, starting at a young age proved invaluable, as *DN*'s design and production editor, Jamie Trounce, found out. "I first skied in San Bernardino in Southern California when I was five. I remember being taught by an instructor with a group of

kids". But Jamie (below), who is profoundly deaf, didn't take to the snow straight away. "I had a knack of falling into some very odd positions," he said.



At the age of ten, over-confidence set in. "I was skiing without any instructor, moving really well and thinking 'this is easy'. Then I veered off course and ended up in a dense forest full of flaky snow which I disappeared up to my wrists in!"

Early disasters firmly behind him, Jamie now feels far more confident on skis. Although he doesn't use any special equipment, Jamie says that being deaf does make a difference to how he skis. "I have to use my eyes a lot more, and sometimes it can make me a bit more cautious," he says. But his next ambition on snow doesn't sound too safety minded. "I'm going skiing next year and, as an ex-skateboarder, it's my ambition to try snowboarding", says Jamie.

Someone who helps disabled people realise their ambitions is Simon Brierley, a group leader with Back-Up. Simon, who became tetraplegic after breaking his neck in an accident, began skiing in 1997 on a trip to "Are" in Sweden organised by Back-Up. The next year he returned to Sweden with Back-

Up as a group leader and has been taking groups ever since. "I teach people who have been recently injured and want to get back to doing some form of physical activity," says Simon.

Simon has used a ski-kart for most of his skiing career, but on a recent trip to Whistler in Canada he decided he was ready for a fresh challenge and upgraded to a bi-ski. "The ski-kart was good for giving me instant balance, but it did limit my long-term progress as a skier," he says.

But what of the factor that puts most people off – cost? There's no denying that trips are expensive, but there is help available. The Uphill Ski Club will provide grants towards the cost of a trip and Back-Up encourages people to pay as much as they can to come on their trips as well as helping to fundraise.

There is one piece of good news that breaks a popular pre-conception. Everyone tends to think that you need an expensive ski suit. Simon disagrees. "It's more important to be prepared for a drastically different environment and wear plenty of layers to keep warm than a flash ski suit," he says. "It's equally important to wear clothes that will let you breathe, as, even in the coldest conditions, you will work up a sweat."

So now you know what is on offer to the disabled skier, how can you resist the temptation to pull on your salopettes and slope off on a ski trip? In the hands of experts like Simon, everything is certain to be all white.

For information about ski organisations, see page 26.

BACK-UP TRUST



Easy rider: Simon Brierley (above) gets ready to roll in a ski-cart while two monoskiers (below) take a breather



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The SEN and Disability Act 2001 comes into force in September 2002. Under the new law, further and higher education institutions now have additional responsibilities to ensure that they make provision against discrimination on grounds of disability. This conference will focus on the practical implications of the Act and the latest developments in best practice.

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Baroness Diana Warwick
Chief Executive, Universities UK
Bert Massie
Chair, Disability Rights Commission (DRC)
Barry Farleigh
Students with Disabilities Officer (SWD), National Union of Students (NUS)
Barbara Waters
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Prepare for the piste

Raring to get on the slopes? Get ready with some cool kit and advice from the experts, says Laura Strong



Want to holiday in a winter wonderland? Try tour operator Ermalow, which organises skiing trips for disabled people who have experience and want to ski independently. Resorts include Avoriaz, Chamonix, La Plagne and Tignes. Write to Ermalow, 9 Reece Mews, London SW7 3HE, tel: 020 7584 2841, e-mail: info@ernalow.co.uk or visit www.ernalow.co.uk

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 If you fancy taking up skiing as a regular sport, get in touch with the British Ski Club for the Disabled, which has ski centres all over the UK and organises holidays for people with any disability, including beginners. Membership is £12.75 a year and there is a fee payable for sessions at ski centres.

Contact Ian Edwards, tel: 07775 687648, e-mail: edwards68@btopenworld.com

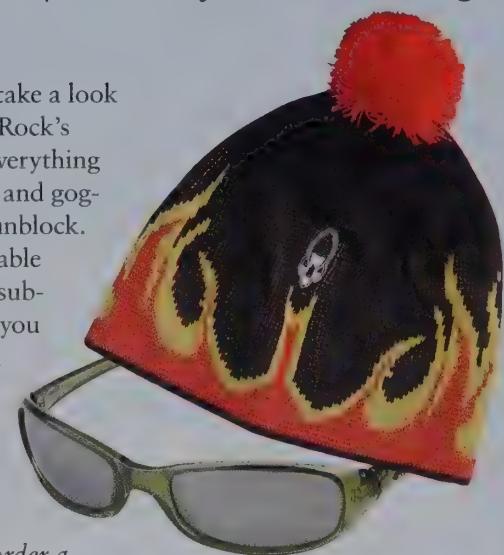
 The Back-Up Trust runs skiing courses aimed at beginners with spinal injuries. The 2002/03 season will include trips to Sweden, France and the US. For more information, contact Sarah Orr, tel: 020 8875 1805, e-mail: courses@backuptrust.org.uk

 The Uphill Ski Club runs skiing trips for disabled people, with holidays this season to Europe, the US and Canada. The charity also provides skiing lessons in Cairngorm – a two-hour lesson costs £40, including equipment hire and one-to-one instruction. For more details, tel: 01479 861 272, e-mail: info@uphillskiclub.co.uk



 For cool kit, take a look at Snow and Rock's range – they have everything from groovy gloves and goggles to socks and sunblock. You'll probably be able to hire most of the substantial equipment you need at your resort, but it'll make you feel the part if you have a few sporty accessories of your own. For more details or to order a catalogue, tel: 0845 100 1000, or visit www.snowandrock.com

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 If you need more inspiration, go along to the Daily Mail Ski and Snowboard Show at Olympia, London, 25 October–3 November. There's a chance to win free tickets on page 47; otherwise, they start at £8 for adults and £5 for children. For more information, tel: 08705 90 00 90, or visit the website www.skiingmail.com

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...get the benefits you are entitled to. Margaret Lavery explains

The benefit system can be complex, often contrary and frequently confusing. Many people may not be aware of what they are entitled to and miss out on essential support.

Take-up of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) – designed to meet some of the extra costs of disability – is low. Government figures estimate take-up for the care component at 30-50 per cent and 50-70 per cent for the mobility component.

Disabled people are more likely to have contact with the benefits system at an earlier stage in their lives and for longer periods than non-disabled people. They are five times more likely than non-disabled people to be out of work and claiming benefits. Those in work have earnings that are 70-80 per cent of the earnings of non-disabled people. On top of that is the extra pressure of meeting disability-related costs.

So how can you find out what to claim?

First, find out what benefits there are. Rather than cover every area, it is best to look at what groups of benefits are relevant to you: it may be the type of benefit or the reason you are claiming, such as having to stop work.

Some benefits replace earnings to a limited extent when there is loss of earning capacity or you are no longer working. These are mostly non-means-tested and are typically based on National Insurance

Money, money, money



Carer's Allowance in April 2003) for full-time carers or Incapacity Benefit for younger people who are deemed incapable of work in youth.

Other benefits, largely means-tested, act as top-ups to income from other benefits (if any), depending on your circumstances. Your income and capital must be below certain limits and you must not work over 16 hours a week. The main means-tested benefit – Income Support – can help towards mortgage interest costs when they are accounted for. Housing Benefit can help with rent. Again, this is subject to income and capital rules, but there is no restriction on hours worked. Similarly, Council Tax Benefit is means-tested help with council tax.

Tax credits (Disabled Persons

Benefits designed to go towards meeting extra costs include Attendance Allowance and DLA. These are not means-tested, are tax free and are paid whether you are in or out of work.

This is only the briefest outline of the benefits system, and each benefit will have its own qualifying criteria. It is important to find out as much information as possible to get your application dealt with speedily and correctly.

There are a range of publications and guides

available. The *Disability Rights Handbook* is an invaluable guide to all relevant benefits and services, and includes chapters on specific benefits, appeals, practical help at home and compensation schemes.

The Child Poverty Action Group produces the comprehensive *Welfare Benefits Handbook*, covering means-tested and non-means-tested benefits in detail.

For help with claims and appeals, a range of agencies may be able to provide assistance. Local disability groups and

other organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau can provide information and advice. National, disability-specific organisations (eg, Scope, RNIB, RNID) may be able to provide more tailored information.

Many local authorities have welfare rights services and run advice sessions. The Department of Work and Pensions has a benefits enquiry line which can provide general information. It can refer you to a forms completion service for help with DLA and Attendance Allowance forms.

Estimates vary, but every year up to £4bn could be going unclaimed in means-tested benefits alone. Good advice and information is out there and it could be the first step in making sure you receive your full entitlement to benefit.



Margaret Lavery is social security policy officer at RADAR.

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'Take-up of Disability Living Allowance – designed to meet some of the extra costs of disability – is low'

contributions, for example Incapacity Benefit (if you are unable to work as a result of disability or ill health) retirement pension or contributory-based Jobseekers Allowance.

There are other earnings replacement benefits which do not require National Insurance contributions, such as Invalid Care Allowance (to be renamed

The Department of Work and Pensions benefits enquiry line is open 8:30am-6:30pm, Monday to Friday, and 9am-1pm on Saturday, tel: 0800 882200, text: 0800 243355.

The *Welfare Benefits Handbook* is published by the Child Poverty Action Group, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF, tel: 020 7837 7979, price £25.

The *Disability Rights Handbook* is produced by the Disability Alliance, Universal House, 88-94 Wentworth Street, London E1 7SA, tel/text: 020 7247 8776, fax: 020 7427 8765, price £13.

There are several websites with step-by-step guides to claiming benefits and appealing against decisions. Try www.benefitsandwork.co.uk and www.bhas.org.uk



Film

Freaks

The Eye

Tod Browning's 1932 *Freaks*, now reissued by the British Film Institute in a sparkling new print, is one of the classics of disability representation: a revenge tale set in the world of circus freak shows, with a cast composed largely of disabled people (above) who were part of that world themselves.

Browning, an experienced horror director – he directed much of Lon Chaney's later work – worked in circuses as a young man. When asked by Universal to produce a talkie to cash in on the success of Universal's *Frankenstein*, he gave them *Freaks*. But the film was banned and remained unseen for the next 30 years.

It's slightly puzzling, 70



years on, to explain that decision, because *Freaks* has a surprising tenderness. Although the intention of the film was entirely exploitative ("The cripples might get you!"), it's full of warmth and respect for its disabled characters. Perhaps that was essential to make the plot work – once they start to take revenge, you realise with a shock that some of these people are genuinely scary. Perhaps this is what caused such offence at the time: the cripples win. All of this is unusual territory for a mainstream film about disability.

Freaks is a very early sound film; it uses the visual language of silent cinema. The final sequence, set in a thunderstorm, where the vengeful freaks hunt down their victims, is extraordinary.

• • • •
Films about the problems of blindness are a Hollywood staple. Films about the problems of sight are rarer. In the Pang brothers' *The Eye* (Jang Pui), a young blind woman, Mun (left), gains sight after a corneal

transplant. But as she grapples with the hazy view of the world that her recovering sight provides, Mun finds she can see more than she expected: the new corneas give her the ability to see the spirits of the dead and mysterious dark figures whose presence presages a forthcoming death.

The film changes gear as Mun seeks out the unsettled spirit of the young suicide whose corneas she has been given and helps her find redemption, before a final sequence where Mun finds that the ability to foresee disaster does not mean she can prevent it. I did find some of the gruesome details here excessive.

Horror aficionados will consider this a solid genre piece rather than a major innovation, but I found it an interesting and moving little ghost story, with enough plot changes to provide continual surprise.

Allan Sutherland



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TV

C4's innovative programming continues with the self-explanatory *Teenage Kicks: Teenage Dwarf*, an absorbing documentary delving into the lives of Nash, Rob and Jonny – all struggling with raging teenage hormones AND being of restricted growth.

We saw them living their normal daily lives, well... normally really (natch) and accompanied them to the World Dwarf Games. Personally, I would have preferred more information about achondroplasia and its long-term implications – but then the show was called *Teenage Kicks*.

Next time I'm moaning about a spot on my chin will somebody come and smack me? *The Luckiest Faces in Britain* (ITV1) introduced us to Sam and Eddie who both have a disfiguring form of neurofibromatosis, and to John whose unusual facial features are genetic. Karen had developed the worst acne imaginable after stopping taking the pill. They all spoke

with staggering dignity and honesty about the ordeal of daily life – when even popping out to the corner shop can be a traumatic experience because of cruel taunts from strangers.

C4, of course, is also known for froth and frivolity. *You Askin' I'm Dancing* was a gander through popular dance crazes of the last half century and, yes, it did include the Birdie Song. Ash Atalla, producer of hit BBC show *The Office* (now back on our screens), popped up to tell us about the difficulty of wheelchair smooching without falling out/getting tangled. And there you were thinking disabled people weren't entitled to snogs/shags etc...

Well, we are! It's official!

No doubt you've already seen the extremely funky promos for *What's Your Problem?*, the BBC series of dramas and documentaries on disability. The only current BBC disability output is *See Hear*. Even they are getting their act together to screen dramas using hearing and deaf actors (BBC2 daytime). You heard it here first.

Jane Shepherd

Have you got any arts news? Send it to Disability Now, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW, fax: 020 7619 7331, minicom: 020 7619 7332.

★★★★ excellent ★★★★★ very good ★★★★ good ★★ OK ★★ poor

Coming up



Mat Fraser is back in a new play *Presto? Or the Secret Life of Swift and Gulliver*. Set the night before Jonathan Swift faces a tribunal to assess his mental competence, the exiled Swift must defend himself against charges of obscenity, blasphemy, nihilism and other crimes. *Presto* opens in Manchester at the end of September, and tours 13 UK cities throughout October. For more details, tel: 020 7395 2603.



Chicken Shed Theatre performs Federico García Lorca's *Blood Wedding* in October. A bride leaves her husband on their wedding night with tragic results. 25-28 September, 2-5 and 9-12 October at the Chicken Shed Theatre, Chaseside, Southgate, London, tel: 020 8292 9222, www.chickenshed.org.uk



High Spin, the dance theatre company featuring people with learning disabilities, is back with a new show *An Electric Bouquet*. Described as an "enchanting world of disguise, living lanterns, horizontal circus, mind-reading and magic without tricks", the show will appear in Brighton and Crawley in October before coming to London in November. For further information, tel: 01273 234734, www.carousel.org.uk



The Royal National Hospital for Neuro-disability in Putney will host the exhibition *Art on the Hill 2002*, 5-6 October. Exhibits will include works by patients and residents of the hospital, ranging from sculpture and ceramics to fine art. For further information, contact Yashoda Sutton, tel: 020 8785 7844.

Theatre

Fringe Festival 2002

With over 1,500 shows on offer, you'd think disability would get a look in at the Edinburgh Festivals. But, this year, that didn't seem to be the case, apart from the comedy circuit.

With the a confident, easy going style that you'd expect from an Aussie, Adam Hill (below) had a wry take on the post 9/11 world. Halfway through his "Happy Feet" set, he glided into his disability material with a gag about his increased fear of flying – airport metal detectors go berserk when he goes through. Once he explains the metal in his shoe is an artificial foot, he is waved through. Security staff are apparently too frightened of causing offence! How secure is that?



Like Hill, fellow comic Francesca Martinez's disability material is individual, not political, and none the less funny for it. At least it was when I caught her at a pre-Edinburgh gig at Riverside Studios, London. Alas, at the Festival, her show *I'MPERFECT* was down ten steps, otherwise I'd have seen it again. Martinez is a pro, getting people to laugh at the situations that extend from non-disabled peoples' attitude. Having an impairment similar to Martinez, I was helpless with knowing laughter at some of her gags.

By contrast, in the theatre, disability was only used as metaphor. *The Mute who was dreamed* by Iranian theatre company Theatre Bazi, was loosely based on the Helen Keller story. The set comprised a cage in which lived a mother and her daughter, who wore blackened glasses and headphones to symbolise her impairment. The play showed the mother using a mixture of cruelty and kindness in an attempt to teach her daughter. This made for a disturbing but powerful piece.

Across the cultural divide, something about the complexities of relationships in education was conveyed. But what sort of image of disability were people left with? Not a very realistic one, I suggest, but not half as bad as that conveyed by *The Blind*.

Apparently, this is a late 19th century symbolist play, given a 21st century makeover by a Canadian group, Theatre Ubu. The two actors, each playing six characters, do not appear on stage but are video projected in the installation space.

The fact they have no bodies apparently symbolises blind peoples' "lack of body language". Um... The group wait for their guide, speaking of their fears and limitations. I found this passivity and limited view of visual impairment irritating and I couldn't get to grips with what the piece might have been about beyond the very obvious existential message that "we are all alone".

Thankfully, Gary Owen's *The Drowned World* (right) was much more enjoyable. This was a collaboration between Graeae and Paines Plough, a group that encourages new writing. With apparently no disabled performers and a writer who doesn't openly identify as disabled, Graeae's input must have been "behind the scenes". Had the play included disabled performers, some of its themes – how society excludes certain groups, how it goes by appearances – could have been explored from a disability perspective. But this was a beautifully written and challenging play.

The Royal Ballet of Flanders' *Swan Lake* included a disabled performer Jurgen Verheyen.



Verheyen has restricted growth and took a prominent role in Jan Fabre's *avante garde* production. There was no pretence that he was a classical dancer, but his athleticism and acting skills were used to the full.

Thankfully, disability was on the minds of festival organisers in a more positive way. The festival brochure had greatly improved its access information so you could tell (almost) at a

glance which venues were wheelchair friendly. Staff at venues tended to be a lot more friendly and laid back than in London. There was no mention of needing a "campanion" nor any batting of eyelids when booking three wheelchair spaces! If disabled people didn't often make it to the stage at the festival, at least we were well represented in the audience.

Ruth Bailey

Music



Barry Adamson
The King of Nothing Hill

Barry Adamson has made music for over 20 years, including stints with Magazine and Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, followed by solo albums and soundtracks for David Lynch. Throughout his career, two things stand out: his contributions to collaborative projects are never less than crucial, and the musical landscapes he inhabits are very dark indeed.

With this album, the rumour is that Barry Adamson has lightened up. This could be attributed to the alleviation of the pain he had experienced all his life, following the success of his third hip replacement operation (the first two failed), and his coming to terms with the death of a sister.

This tone is set immediately with 'Cinematic Soul', a slice of raw funk complete with Isaac Hayes style wah-wah guitar and an upbeat

lyrical mode. Other tracks go the same way, notably the single "Black Amour", a homage to Barry White, where Adamson blames his physical problems for possible lapses in his sexual technique: "If I ain't on the money/It's because I'm in traction".

The question is whether this cheerfulness is a good thing, given that the beauty of much of Adamson's work is the musical equivalent of *film noir*. Whilst Adamson the optimist is perfectly competent, he doesn't really excite. Happily, he fails to sustain this mood for the whole album and falls back into his *noir persona*, producing outstanding tracks – notably "When Darkness Calls" and the instrumental "The Crime Scene".

This may be his least coherent solo effort, but the lighter moments make it his most accessible. There is something here for everyone, making it a good place to start for those unfamiliar with his work.

John Appleby

Barry Adamson plays at The Marquee in London on 9 October. Info: 08701 202221.

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Techno talk

Janet Larcher reports back on the latest equipment at this year's Communication Matters exhibition

With two major communication conferences this summer, manufacturers took the opportunity to bring out lots of new equipment and to add features to existing devices.

ISAAC (International Society for Augmented and Alternative Communication; www isaac-online.org) held its biennial conference in Odense, Denmark in August and Communication Matters (www.communicationmatters.org.uk) had its annual conference this September in Lancaster.

Both conferences were excellent in assisting people who use augmented and alternative communication – as well as their parents, enablers and professionals – to share experiences, get ideas and see the largest range of communication equipment ever assembled.

Advocate (below) is a

new concept in combining communication and environmental control in a small but rugged handheld device that looks like a stretched mobile phone and weighs only 8.5 oz. It has 16 minutes of high quality digital speech, with up to two minutes of recording per location. It has four levels of single selection locations and one additional level where locations can be combined to give a longer or more complex message. It has two alarms as well as infrared communication with optional remote text display and environmental control. £695, *Toby Churchill*, tel: 01223 576117.

Springboard (above) is a new Minspeak device from PRi. Small, with a 7.5in colour touch screen display, it claims an eight to ten hour battery life and up to 50 minutes of digitised speech. It can be used with 4, 8, 15 or 32 locations, and comes with the vocabulary packages LLL-Stepping Stones or Unity preloaded. £1,799, *PRi*, tel: 01733 370470.



Dynawrite (right) is a new, keyboard-based communication aid. Easily portable (2.16lbs), its keyboard can be used directly or by switch by attaching one of three scanning keyboards (qwerty, ABC or letter frequency). The amount of text that can be viewed at any one time will depend upon whether the small, medium or large font is used.

Up to five words can be predicted to speed the typing process and it copes with misspellings, provided the letters are in the right order. You can also interrupt your typed message to give a spoken response to someone who has entered the room. Messages can be sent direct to a computer via a DynaBeam link, and the system is clever enough to identify if more than one application is running on your computer and will ask you which one should receive the message. £2,150, *Dynavox*, tel: 01384 446789.

The new Tellus Lite (below), weighing in at 2.7lbs, is based upon the new Fujitsu LTP-600 and has the first sunlight readable colour LCD screen: the brighter the sun, the brighter the screen! It also

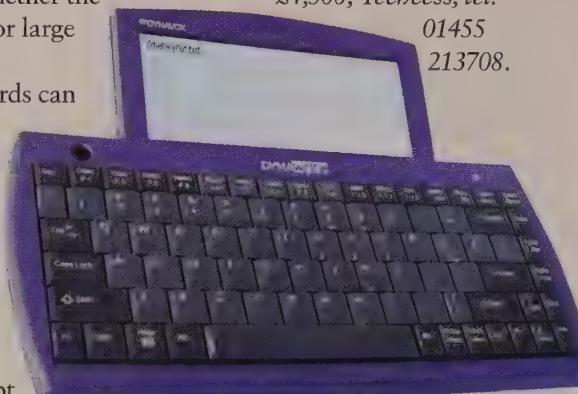
has a backlight so it can be used indoors. It's a powerful device (Pentium III 600Mhz processor) and packs plenty of volume through its two integrated speakers. Both the Tellus Lite and its big brother, the Tellus, caused lots of interest, since they can now send and receive text messages from a mobile phone via symbols in Mindexpress, the

same technology that allows wire-free printing. Both devices have "hot swappable" batteries so that they can be changed without turning the device off.

But even more exciting was the portable battery that looked just like, and can even be used as, a mouse pad. Using this, a Tellus runs for a minimum of nine hours and still leaves a further three to four hours on its own integrated battery.

Tellus is now sold with a three-year warranty, including up to two screen replacements a year with no questions asked. There is also software to flip between communication software and other applications, including internet access.

£4,500, *Techcess*, tel: 01455 213708.



Advances in simpler devices include a four location version of the very light and portable device Go Talk (£129) as well as one and two location versions of the popular Techtalk devices called Partner (one £75 or two £95). The 4pic4 ringbinder is one of the cheapest "no tech" communication aids available (£15) as well as a useful way of storing inserts for the 4talk4 communication aid. *Inclusive Technology*, tel: 01457 819790.

The Eclipse now offers an auditory scanning facility, a feature which is not always easy to find on the simpler devices. £1,400-£1,850, *Morphonics*,



tel: 01524 848373. And a new European version of **Recipes for Success**, a resource guide to 248 activities, with step-by-step instructions to promote independence and inclusion, is now available. £50, *QED*, tel: 0870 7878850.

Meanwhile the **LibOrator** (above) is an interesting device which allows the screen to be mounted vertically or horizontally on an unusual three-legged mount. £3,456, *Liberator*, tel: 01476 550391

People who knew Winspeak, Windbag & Handsoff should know that they are now all combined into **The Grid** – one of the most flexible programs to hit the communication scene in years. It lets the user communicate via symbols or words (including word prediction), control windows functions (including dialog boxes, web page links, taskbar and start menu), flip between applications and even reboot the computer. The supplier also has a wide range of portable, notebook and Windows CE devices on which to run this software. £240, *Sensory Software*, tel: 01684 578868.

Successful communication requires more than just technology. **Communication Matters** has produced seven free leaflets to raise awareness: *What is AAC?*, *What can I say?*, *How to be a good listener*, *Using symbols for communication*, *Let your hands do the talking*, *First steps* and *Accessing communication aids and computers*. Free, tel: 0870 606 5463.

There is an increasing recognition and acceptance that children need to be consulted, but this is often overlooked for children who find communication difficult. There were a number of presentations around this issue. *Listening to Children with Communication Support Needs* is a new resource pack jointly published by SENSE and the CALL Centre, which includes a review of legislation and practice on consulting children in Scotland as well as extensive information and resources on how to do it. £20, *Call Centre*, tel: 0131 651 6236.

Dr Janet Larcher is an independent consultant on microtechnology aids for people with disabilities. Tel: 01932 84730 or email janet@larcher.co.uk

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Voice recognition software used to be frustratingly slow. But now you can dictate up to 160 words a minute, says Conrad Hodgkinson

Christine Barton can't hold a pen or use a keyboard. A member of the General Social Care Council and chair of the Sheffield Centre for Inclusive Living Group, Christine has multiple sclerosis (MS) and is no longer able to move independently. But the ability to write quickly and accurately is essential for both roles. She needed an alternative – so, enter the Dragon!

Sadly, we're not talking Bruce Lee here, but NaturallySpeaking, the latest version of Dragon Systems' voice recognition software. Dragon is now owned by Scansoft.

"Leading an ordinary life matters very much to me," Christine says, "but some things I have to do differently. My Dragon lets me be different."

Many people will have tried voice recognition software in the past and found it frustrating. It was slow, inaccurate and tended to do awful things to your computer. In particular, the cut-down versions sometimes supplied free with new computers did the software a great disservice. Far from encouraging people to use the new technology, it was more likely to put them off for life.

Things have moved on. Combined with a fast computer (700 MHz+), enough memory (preferably at least 256 MB), and a top-quality sound card and microphone, the latest versions of programmes like Dragon NaturallySpeaking, IBM ViaVoice and L&H VoiceXpress allow fast, accurate dictation – up to 160 words per minute – into most standard word-processing applications.

It doesn't stop there. It's now possible to carry out virtually any operation that can be done with a mouse and keyboard by voice and totally hands-free.

In addition to dictating text, Christine can open, save, print and close documents, switch between applications, create and edit text, insert pictures, create PowerPoint presentations, surf the web, send and receive e-mail, etc. And, when she's bored with that, she can play games like bridge or solitaire.

"It's not perfect," Christine says, "and sometimes I hate it.

The magic Dragon



Talk out: Christine Barton can't do without NaturallySpeaking

But mostly I love it and I certainly can't do without it."

Before you rush off to PC World, a word of caution. Even the latest versions are not 100 per cent accurate when dictating – they probably never will be – but if you are able to speak consistently and are careful to pronounce the beginning and end of words, 95 per cent accuracy is entirely realistic.

I use NaturallySpeaking all the time and can put words on

screen almost as quickly as I can speak. The irritating delay between saying something and it appearing has all but disappeared.

I have, however, learned to proof-read my copy very carefully. For the review I wrote for *DN* in March, of Brotherwood's adapted Fiat Multipla, I used the phrase "Brotherwood's new Fiat conversion". This appeared on screen as "Brotherwood's new Fiat perversion". So be warned!

To begin using the software, you first create a user file. The programme asks you to read a passage of text for about five minutes. This allows the software to analyse your voice and to learn how you speak. After that, you're away.

Dictating feels strange to begin with (comma), because you have to say most punctuation (full stop). But you soon get used to it (exclamation mark)! Capitals

linked Dragon software to his Possum environmental controls.

"You can have dozens of commands," he says, "and I like the 'everything under one roof' feeling. I control both the computer and environmental controls from one source. And I use a radio microphone so that I'm not tied to the computer."

Alastair Hignell, ex-England international rugby player, now

'I need to be able to produce material to the same high standard as anyone else. Voice recognition gives me the necessary tools and information'

are normally inserted automatically and spelling is not a problem because words are selected from a built-in dictionary. It is important to correct recognition errors, because the software "learns" as you do this and dictation becomes more accurate.

The capacity to bring up applications, access menus and use keyboard shortcuts entirely by voice makes this software invaluable for hands-free users – and the commands menu is virtually 100 per cent accurate. The interface with Microsoft Internet Explorer is particularly slick (you have only to say a link to go there).

What do others think? Richard Shaw from Derby has

a commentator with the BBC, has MS. He uses NaturallySpeaking to write reports.

"The recognition is extremely good," he says. "I have only had about half-an-hour's tuition, enough to get going, but when I can arrange some proper in-depth tuition I feel I will be able to gain full benefit from its undoubted potential." For more information, go to www.scansoft.com/naturallyspeaking AbilityNet is a charity providing advice and information on computing for disabled people. It has considerable experience of voice recognition systems. Tel: 0800 269545, or visit www.abilitynet.co.uk

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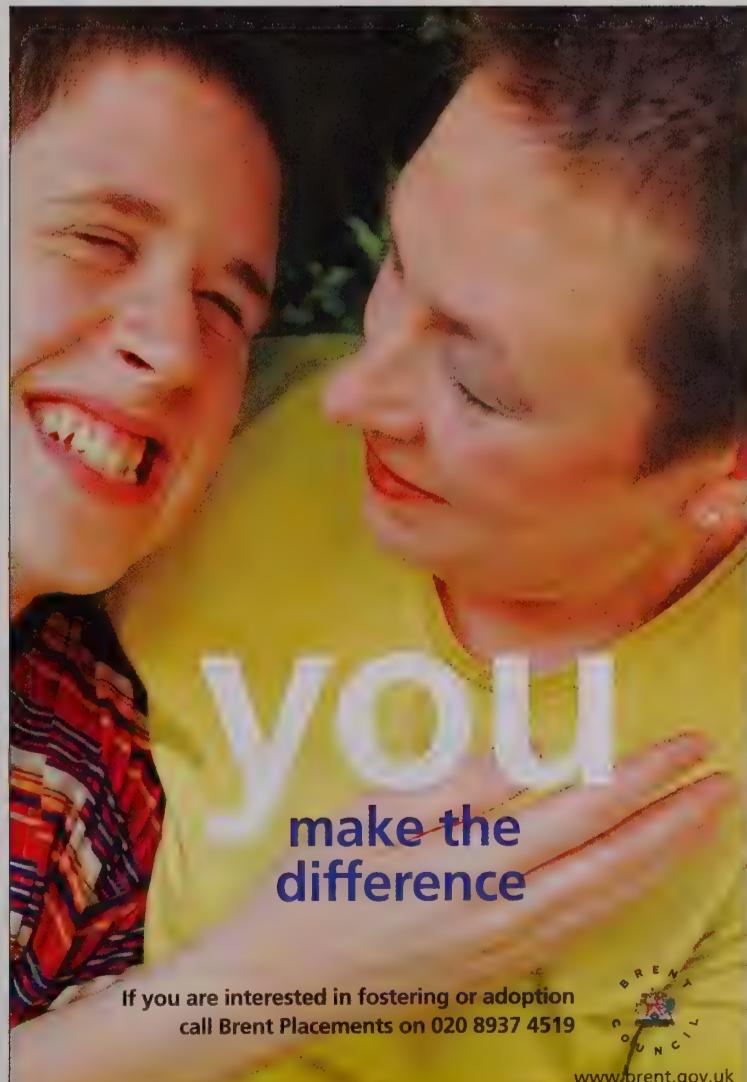


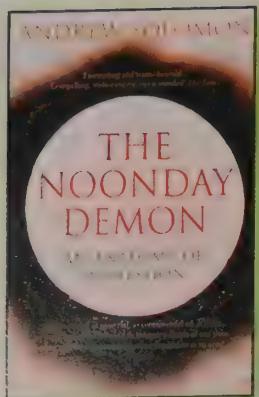
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The Noonday Demon: An Anatomy of Depression

Andrew Solomon
Vintage, £8.99

The Noonday Demon: An Anatomy of Depression is neither an autobiography nor a textbook. Instead, the author joins these two genres to form a new and powerful text on depression.

The book is divided into 12 chapters. Each chapter deals with a specific theme and usually begins with a personal account from Solomon. He uses this as a base from which to present and discuss the many arguments, facts, statistics and claims of that chapter's topic.

Solomon somehow manages to put into words what so many of us feel at some time in our lives. He has also managed to condense a terrifyingly huge amount of medical information. This does not make for easy reading – at times, it is harrowing and painful to read. It is highly academic, its pages are densely printed, its chapters are long and its language at times is highly technical. But depression is never straightforward. Any book that says otherwise avoids the deeper

issues that must be discussed if we are to reach a full understanding of the illness.

The Noonday Demon can be used as a reference book to dip into. If you have ever experienced depression, you may find answers, relief, food for thought and inspiration. You may also find the words that you have never been able to express yourself. For this reason it is a must-read for nurses, doctors, GPs, mental health service workers, employers and politicians. But, more than that, if your friends and family do not, cannot or will not understand how you feel, just say nothing and put a copy of *The Noonday Demon* into their hands.

Alison Doel



Old Man Goya

Julia Blackburn
Jonathan Cape, £16.99

his scary, fascinating etchings. Her later discovery of his deafness led to this new biography, where she concentrates "on what happened to Goya after the illness which made his world turn silent and forced him to depend upon his eyes for everything".

Little biographical material exists about Goya, and the author conducts most of her research by visiting the places he lived and by looking at his surviving work. The result is a personal, strongly visual and

quite speculative account of the last 35 years of his life. Years in which war, famine, disease and the nightmare of the Inquisition raged about him while he produced his most powerful work.

It is a sympathetic, even affectionate, portrayal that treats Goya's deafness intelligently: not as an ongoing tragedy, but as a gradually accepted and embraced fact of life that came to reflect an essential part of the man.

Adam Reynolds

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The Man Who Lost His Language

Sheila Hale
Allen Lane, £14.99

Sheila Hale is a travel writer and journalist whose husband, John, had a stroke and consequent language loss in 1992.

Carers of a stroke patient (like me) will approach the story with trepidation. We want to increase our knowledge, to be reassured that we are doing it right, to see the future. But all too easily we are made to feel inadequate and undermined.

Here, however, we have a book that intermingles the particular case with the general story of the nature of stroke, especially the speech difficulties that often follow. Each case of stroke and aphasia is different, with outcomes dependent upon the particular areas and networks of the brain left damaged or

undamaged. Some damage has more profound consequences than others.

The author introduces us to the structure of the brain, and surveys current thinking on the causes of aphasia, the variety of individual problems that arise, the treatments available and projected, as well as the consequences for the patient. This survey is unnecessarily technical and is not an easy read. But there are rewards.

The book gives examples of special techniques used to good effect by individual speech therapists, showing that flexibility is needed. We are alerted to the importance of attitude of everyone involved in rescuing a life. For life does continue beyond stroke, and can undoubtedly be very good, despite the totally negative outlook of some so-called experts, who would have the victim of stroke written off immediately.

An unadorned exposure of shortcomings within the British public service system begins and ends the book. It confirms the experiences of many. Have we lost all ethical standards in our dealing with sick people? To read this may strengthen the resolve of those who resist passive acceptance of what is offered.

Mary Eriksen

Book news



Elspeth Waldie spent 19 months travelling in Bangladesh, where she met disabled individuals from all walks of life. Their stories of perseverance have been collected in *Triumph of the Challenged*. Send a cheque for £11 (incl p&p) payable to Elspeth Waldie to Purple Field Press, 10 Hill View Terrace,

Ilminster, Somerset TA19 9AL, or order from your bookshop.

Two volumes on prosthetics have hit the bookshelves, *Artificial Parts, Practical Lives* (NYU, £16.50) and *The Prosthetic Aesthetic* (Lawrence & Wishart, £14.99). The first is available from amazon.com, while the second (an issue of the journal *New Formations*) can be ordered direct, orders@l-w-bks.demon.co.uk

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In a class of your own

Want to get out and improve yourself at the same time? Try going along to evening classes, says Dan Batten

A traditional night out to most people means relaxing the grey matter and not taking on anything too taxing. So, how many of us would find it fun to go back to school?

Before you dismiss the idea, think about it. As an adult, you can choose your own subject and learn whatever you fancy. Computing, acting, learning a language or how to play a musical instrument – there'll be plenty on offer at your adult education centre or college. The world is your oyster.

But before you jump in at the deep end, consider a few things. First, find out if what's on offer is what you really want. Adult education centres and colleges publish prospectuses and have information on their websites. For people living in London, *Floodlight* gives details of courses available in the capital.

'I took drum lessons during my years at university. As time went by, it emerged that I had a sense of rhythm that was, according to tutor Richard, "better than most"'

Outside London, the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) can help point you in the right direction.

As vital as choosing your course is knowing whether you can access the building, so it will be helpful to check out the venue before you enrol.

While you are free to choose your course, they very rarely come free – although most colleges and adult education centres offer reduced course fees to people on benefits or who live in their local borough.

Course lengths vary from a few weeks to an academic year, so consider how much time you want to devote to one. And if you are choosing to do a class for career development, make sure you will get a certificate which is recognised in the field you want to get into and that skills you learn are up to date.

Someone who benefited from a spell at evening school is Michele Jones from Derby. Michele, 21, had had a stroke when she was 18 and wanted to brush up on "rusty" IT skills.

"Apart from using basic stuff like Word, I hadn't used a computer since I left college," she says. "I was always interested



Drummer boy: Dan shows what he's made of on the drum kit

in IT, but my stroke left me feeling a bit out of touch."

After some digging in her local library, Michele found a six-week basic IT skills course at her local college, which included a section on using the internet, as well as training in the popular software packages used in most offices.

As a result of what she learned, Michele took a more advanced course and now has a job, working as an assistant in a

bookshop. She uses her IT skills to find books for customers, using a database and the internet. She also does a range of administrative duties.

"Without that class I wouldn't have my job now, which I love," she says.

As well as the material benefits from learning a new skill, there are also the social ones. If you are studying the same subject with a group of people, the chances are that

you might have other shared interests. This could lead to a new circle of friends.

I discovered this myself when I took drum lessons during my years at university. Having cerebral palsy, I realised I wasn't setting myself the easiest task in the world. We began slowly, learning basic skills for weeks. As time went by, I progressed and it emerged that I had a sense of rhythm that was, according to tutor

Richard, "better than most". I also noticed my co-ordination improved drastically.

I started playing with musicians who had similar musical tastes. Then, one day, Richard asked if we would like to play in the college end-of-year show. The exhibitionist in all of us said yes after Richard's assurance that it would be an intimate affair.

"There'll only be two or three hundred people watching," he said. Our grins turned to looks of terror.

We plumped for being the noisiest band on the bill with a few Jimi Hendrix songs, and after weeks of practising several of Mr H's classics, it was time to hit the stage. I sat at my kit, shaking more than usual, until Richard counted us in.

Magically, my nerves vanished and I had the time of my life. The audience cheered loudly as we finished our set and asked for more.

I still play and can be relied on to fill in on the drummer's stool for friends in need, including Richard.

So, whether you want to indulge a passion or improve your prospects, there's bound to be a local class that suits you.

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DN sent the experts to the Independent Living exhibition to check out the latest equipment

Get moving

Sue Clements looks at what's new in mobility aids

The Independent Living Exhibition at Wembley was busy, and space was limited for trying out mobility equipment. When claims are made that certain scooters can do no curbs, it is useful to be able to put them to the test!

RGK produce a range of active user manual chairs of high repute (right). Their new Ergoseat system, for a wheelchair frame, has a ramp incorporated into it, which removes the need for a high cushion and enables the user to find a better sitting position. They also have a new tennis wheelchair, which gives a better rest position under the seat and will mean that certain shots around the feet will be easier. £1,995. Tel: 01772 777777.

Two new active user power chairs were good to look at. The Quickie P220 from Sunrise Medical (right)

has a rear wheel drive and the Xterra GT from Invacare a mid-wheel drive.

The Quickie P220 can rear wheel balance, ie, the front wheels leave the ground enough to help the chair with kerb climbing. It can also be converted into a manual chair.

The Xterra GT has a very tight turning circle and was very nippy. Uniquely, each of its six wheels is independently sprung so it will stay in contact with the ground better when on

uneven surfaces. It has a top speed of 7.5mph.

The Quickie P220 costs £4,400 and the Xterra £3,995. Sunrise Medical tel: 01384 446688; Invacare tel: 01656 647327.

TGA Electric Leisure was promoting an unusual power chair called the Buzz. It has a

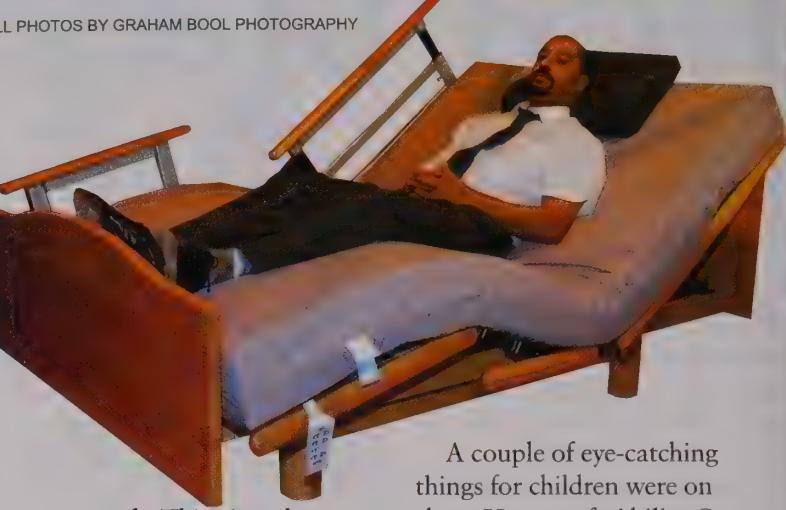
bucket seat and a low, one-piece footrest. Instead of a joystick, it has two hand-held levers at seat height, one on the right and one on the left. Both hands are needed to depress the levers to move forwards.

Similarly, both are needed to raise them to brake and stop. One hand is needed for turning. It is different, unconventional, and may appeal to some people. £995. Tel: 01787 882244.

The Silver Bullet range of scooters (right) is also different and not modified to meet any

particular need. It is a fast (up to 15mph), motorised scooter usable by people over 14 years of age and those able to ride a bicycle. It can be used where it is legal to ride a pedal cycle. £399-499. Tel: 0121 354 9433.

Trevor Baylis, of clockwork radio fame, has been lending support, through his Foundation, to a wheelchair



power pack. This gives the pusher of a manual chair powered assistance. The Trevor Baylis Troll is a barrel shaped mechanism, which is clamped onto the wheelchair frame under the seat.

Something similar has been used on golf courses, hence it has very good traction. There is a go button and a stop/braking button.

The hand does not need to stay on the go button as the chair moves – this and the braking feature distinguish it from others.

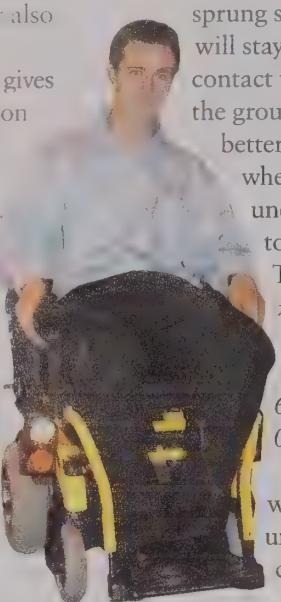
At £399 from Trolltech, it is cheaper than some of its rivals.

Tel: 01883 744413.

The Meywalk (right) and Miniwalk are adult and junior walkers from the Helping Hand Co. They both have saddle seats and trunk support, and the adult one has a neat mechanism to assist transfer onto the seat and to standing. Because they are narrow they will get through doors more easily than a wheelchair. In a range of colours, the adult version costs £1,150 and the junior model £799. Tel: 01531635388.

The GPS (Growth Proportionate System) is a modular system, which can be built up to suit the child's needs, including tilt-in-space. It can fit into a range of buggies including the GPS mountain-type, all terrain, three-wheeled buggy, giving a child who needs seating support the benefits of an outdoor buggy. From £895. Tel: 01725 519405.

Sue Clements is senior advisor at the Disabled Living Foundation.



GENIE

Good health demands that everyone should stand up, preventing bladder problems and assisting with better circulation, digestion, bone development and pressure management. The versatile Genie also assists carers by alleviating unnecessary lifting.



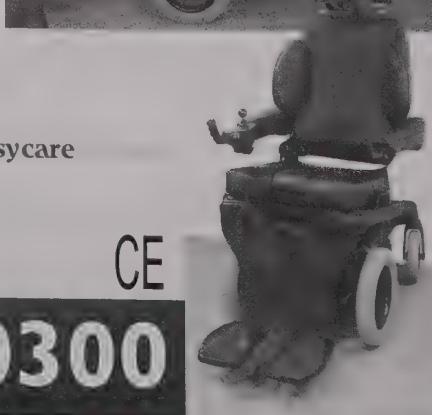
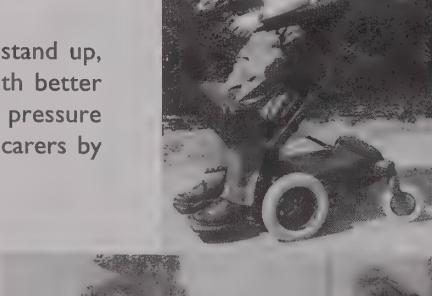
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Park Lane, Old Park, Telford, TF3 4TE.
Fax: 01952 616588

01952 610300

easycare

CE



At home

Sue Heaton helps you pep up your pad

The Independent Living exhibition had quite a few new products – if I looked for them.

Bakare (*opposite, top*) showed a 4ft wide, height adjustable, profiling bed that looked really nice and would suit someone who is larger than average or is used to sleeping in a larger bed. If you need help with transfers or turning in bed, do check with your helper before you buy, in case a wide bed creates problems for them. £2,495, mattress extra. Tel: 01752 51222.

A new hoist caught my eye. The **Aks-foldo** rotating hoist from **Airtec** rotates over the bath to allow access without the hoist feet going under the bath. This could give it unlimited use throughout the house. £2,550. Tel: 08702 422453.

Only recently have people become aware of the need for pressure relief cushions within armchairs. The following chairs could help and come with various seat heights and design features, such as drop-down arms for easier access. **Careflex** has the **Quinta** armchair, from £269 and the **Ketra**, priced slightly higher, tel: 01626 836440. A **J** Way has the **Fleming** chair with **Reflexion** cushioning, tel: 01494 471821 and **M.S.S.** has the **Flotech** range, tel: 01443 839200.

For children, I was drawn to the **Mangar Surfer Bather** (*opposite, below*), which would help minimise moving and handling risks for parents or carers when they are getting kids in and out of the bath. £760. Tel: 01544 267674.

Mangar will be at the **Kidz Up North** exhibition, 6 November, at the **Reebok Stadium**, **Bolton**, the only UK exhibition totally dedicated to children with disabilities. For more information, tel: 0161 214 5959.

Still on children, I was pleased to see that the charity



buying items like stair lifts, baths with doors and riser-recliner chairs. £20. For information tel: 0161 834 1044.

Finally, we are well into the 21st century, but where was the "SMART" technology? I saw a few new developments.

Cambridge Adaptive

Communication has a new communication tool, the **Cameleon 4**, tel: 01296 461002.

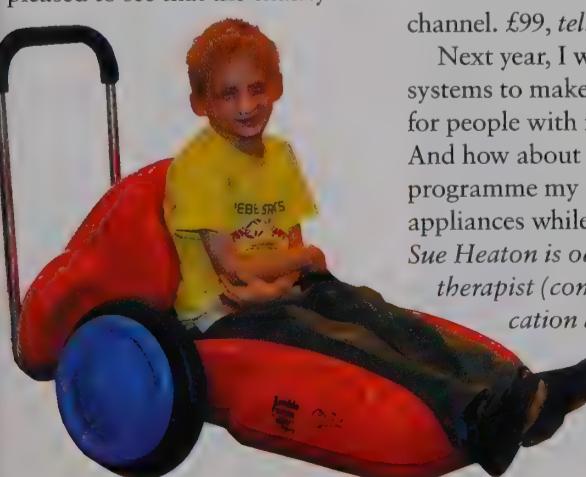
SRS Technology has made some useful changes to their environmental control system which allows them to re-programme your system

remotely. Tel: 01922 456882.

Passion for the Planet has a digital radio (*above*) that allows you to access new channels, including one for people over 50 and a health and environment channel. £99, tel: 020 8544 0091.

Next year, I want to see systems to make the home safe for people with memory loss. And how about something to programme my lighting or appliances while I am out?

Sue Heaton is occupational therapist (community, education and training) at Disabled Living Manchester.



Ricability is adding *Choosing childcare products: new guides for disabled parents* to its range of publications in November. The booklet will include consumer views and tips. No price for this yet, but prices for existing booklets, such as *Making your kitchen easier to use*, range from 19p to 87p, depending on postage. Tel: 020 7427 2469 for a complete list.

The **RNIB** have just brought out a new booklet, *Making the Most of Lighting*. To go with this, they had some good looking desk and floor standing task lighting with daylight bulbs, priced from £35. They also have a big button, cordless telephone and some new tactile markers that are better than Bump Ons for hot surfaces. **Tacti-Marks** cost £3.95 for a tube that should last you a good while, tel: 0845 1023153.

Disabled Living Manchester has new **Wise Buy** leaflets, a series of 13 leaflets available on disc for statutory and voluntary organisations to purchase, personalise and print useful information for their users about

buying items like stair lifts, baths with doors and riser-recliner chairs. £20. For information tel: 0161 834 1044.

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Sue Heaton is occupational

therapist (community, edu-

cation and training) at

Disabled

Living

Manchester.

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ILLUSTRATION BY CLARE CURTIS

Uphill struggle

Recently, my wife became blind and I would appreciate your help.

Three years ago, my right leg was amputated above the knee and I had to fight tooth and nail for things that I need. I am in my early 70s.

G. Atkinson, Northampton

I am sorry to about the difficulties you are encountering and that you have had to fight for services you are entitled to.

As for your wife, you could contact the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) helpline. It provides information, support and advice for anyone with a serious sight problem. It can put you in touch with specialist advice services, send you free information and leaflets, and give you details of

Berkshire Disability Information Network, Bracknell School, Rectory Lane, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 7BA, tel: 01344 301572.

Limbless Association, Roehampton Rehabilitation Centre, Roehampton Lane, London SW15 5PR, tel: 020 8788 1777.

RNIB helpline, tel: 0845 766 9999, Mon-Fri 9am-5pm. Calls are charged at local rates. RNIB Midlands and Anglia, Bakewell Road, Peterborough PE2 6XU, tel: 01733 370777.

try it, enjoy it, and have some fun



Dear Ann

- love and loneliness
- bereavement
- personal problems
- advice and support

Ann Darnbrough, who is disabled herself, is co-author of the *Directory for Disabled People* and other guides.

Write to her at *Disability Now*, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW or e-mail your problem to editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



A problem shared

I recently attended a ten-week course that helps disabled people think about their future and what they would like to do. One of my goals is to help other disabled people, and I would particularly like to be an agony aunt.

Can you come up with any ideas of how I could do this on a voluntary basis and any training I might need to undertake?

Mandy, Birmingham

Well, you may be surprised to hear that I'm not at all sure how to advise you – there aren't that many openings.

It might be useful to take a course in counselling. A course in journalism could also be helpful. You could start by helping out at a local disability information service. Citizens Advice Bureau training is, I understand, especially good.

With some training, you could apply to local papers to suggest they have a regular agony aunt column and supply them with some made-up questions and answers as examples. You could also search out disability magazines that might want such a column.

You need to have a very broad range of interests and not take yourself too seriously.

this is improving. Many organisations run by disabled people have become very strong and they are not going to put up with discrimination in any way – certainly not by professionals. I am sure you will be able to find a disability organisation in your area and, when you are fighting for rights and equality, the energy you summon up will help your loneliness. I think you may find the Berkshire Disability Information Network very helpful.

Looking for love

I have been on my own for six years after losing my wife. I have been trying to find an attractive, genuine, loyal, loving lady to give me a chance. Because I am slightly disabled, no women want to know. I don't mind if they are disabled.

The majority of women I see want to know how big my bank balance is, and what sort of home or car I have. The rest cannot see beyond the crutches. They can't see your personality.

I am 59, and my disabilities are due to spinal nerve damage – I was blown up in Northern Ireland.

Dave, Guisborough

It is never easy to find a partner, but believe me, if you find the right person, disability will not come between you.

You could advertise in a personal column in your local newspaper and elsewhere, including *DN*.

Do you have hobbies that could help you meet women and men, somewhere it is not obvious that you are looking for a special woman friend and where you would have shared interests? You could try clubs for disabled people, or clubs for people of your own age. Too many men make the mistake of looking for younger women.

You could always try evening classes (see page 34). They are a wonderful way to meet people.



DN's telephone counsellor Lin Berwick gives disabled people and carers advice and support on personal and spiritual problems. Disabled herself, Lin is a psycho-therapeutic counsellor and Methodist local preacher, with a postgraduate diploma in homeopathic medicine. If you have something you need to discuss in confidence, talk to her on Mondays 6pm-10pm and Thursdays 1pm-5pm, tel: 01787 882111.

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self catering apartments, full board rooms, en-suite facilities, indoor heated pool, indoor games arena, climbing wall, courtyard gardens, jacuzzi & steam room and licensed bar

activities include

archery, sailing & canoeing, horse riding, trap driving, climbing & abseiling, kayaking, zip-wire rides, swimming, coastal walks & moorland walking

Bright ideas

Do you have problems keeping your balance in the bathroom in traditional slippers? Then try a pair of bathroom slippers from DirectBuy. Made from waterproof PVC, they have anti-slip soles and elastic straps built into the slipper to let you wash your feet without having to bend over. They gently massage as well – I’m almost tempted to soak my feet and try a pair at my desk, but I don’t think the DN team would appreciate it! £9.97 plus £2.99 p&p, tel: 020 8240 4494, www.directbuyltd.com



Wouldn’t it be great if your child’s powered chair could grow with them? Well, the Wizard from Rainbow Rehab does just that. Featuring two adjustable and interchangeable seat sizes, the front wheel drive Wizard also has a seat raise function, powered seat recline and tilt function as well as a headrest to keep kids comfortable from two years to their teens. To top it off, it is built on a compact chassis, making it easier to negotiate awkward spaces. Prices start from £6,975, tel: 01202 481818, e-mail: info@rainbow-rehab.co.uk



In the kitchen, cans that open with a ringpull can be a nightmare if, like me, your hands are none too dexterous. Well, the Canpull should help to turn those who can’t open items into “can open”-ers. The small piece of moulded polycarbonate locks under the ring pull and removes the offending lids with a tug, freeing up those vital ingredients for your gourmet delight. £2.99, for stockists, tel: 01689 854438.

Heard of any gadgets, devices or equipment others could find helpful? Tell Dan Batten at DN, tel: 020 7619 7323, e-mail: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

From kitchen goods to bathroom slippers, Dan Batten knows the latest equipment to help you out

Do you enjoy creating in the kitchen but find reading the numbers on a conventional measuring jug awkward? Good Grips may have found the answer with their angled measuring jug. It features two sets of measuring lines, one on the outside and one at a 45° angle to the base, so you can stare down and make sure your sauce gets just the right amount of liquid. £4.99, stockists, tel: 01282 613644.



If you have a splitting headache and the aspirin isn’t working, or if you just want to give your tired eyes a rest, the Soothie from GFI could be just the thing you need. An eye-mask with 21st century technology, the Soothie applies just the right pressure to your eye sockets, cutting out excessive light and cooling any muscle strain. The company claims that just five minutes a day with the Soothie can “significantly enhance health, increase feelings of well-being, focus and concentrate the mind, promote restful sleep and, above all, stimulate the mind and body to produce many vital substances that keep your mind and body young, alert, alive and fully functioning.” Londoners can find out for themselves by picking one up at Selfridges. Otherwise, call the 24-hour order line, tel: 01803 847776.

With winter on the way, there’ll be cold hands aplenty. Why not thaw out in half the time with a hand warmer pad? When dipped in a pan of boiling water, the pad reaches a scorching 130° Fahrenheit in under five seconds, and will keep those frozen mitts warm for close to 45 minutes. The pad can be used several hundred times, so a quick defrost is always at hand. £4.95, tel: 0845 745 4797, www.paramountzone.com

Reader BW Smyth, from Dagenham, has found a good way to make sure your wheelchair gets spotted in the dark. It’s a reflector from Glo-Marka, which comes with stickers and tapes that can adorn your wheelchair or buggy, as well as shoulder belts and waistcoats to go about your person. It’s the only way to glow while stopping people from bashing into your wheelchair. Tel: 01271 885528, e-mail: glo-marka@lineone.net

Disability Now's
comprehensive holiday
coverage begins in the
January 2003 issue

So, if you want 70,000 readers to see what your company can offer, or the benefits of staying in your accommodation, call Richard or Patrick now!



Richard

Tel: 020 7619 7336

email: richard.gresham@scope.org.uk

Patrick

Tel: 020 7619 7320

email: patrick.durhammatthews@scope.org.uk

Fax: 020 7619 7331

Final booking deadline: 3rd December 2002.

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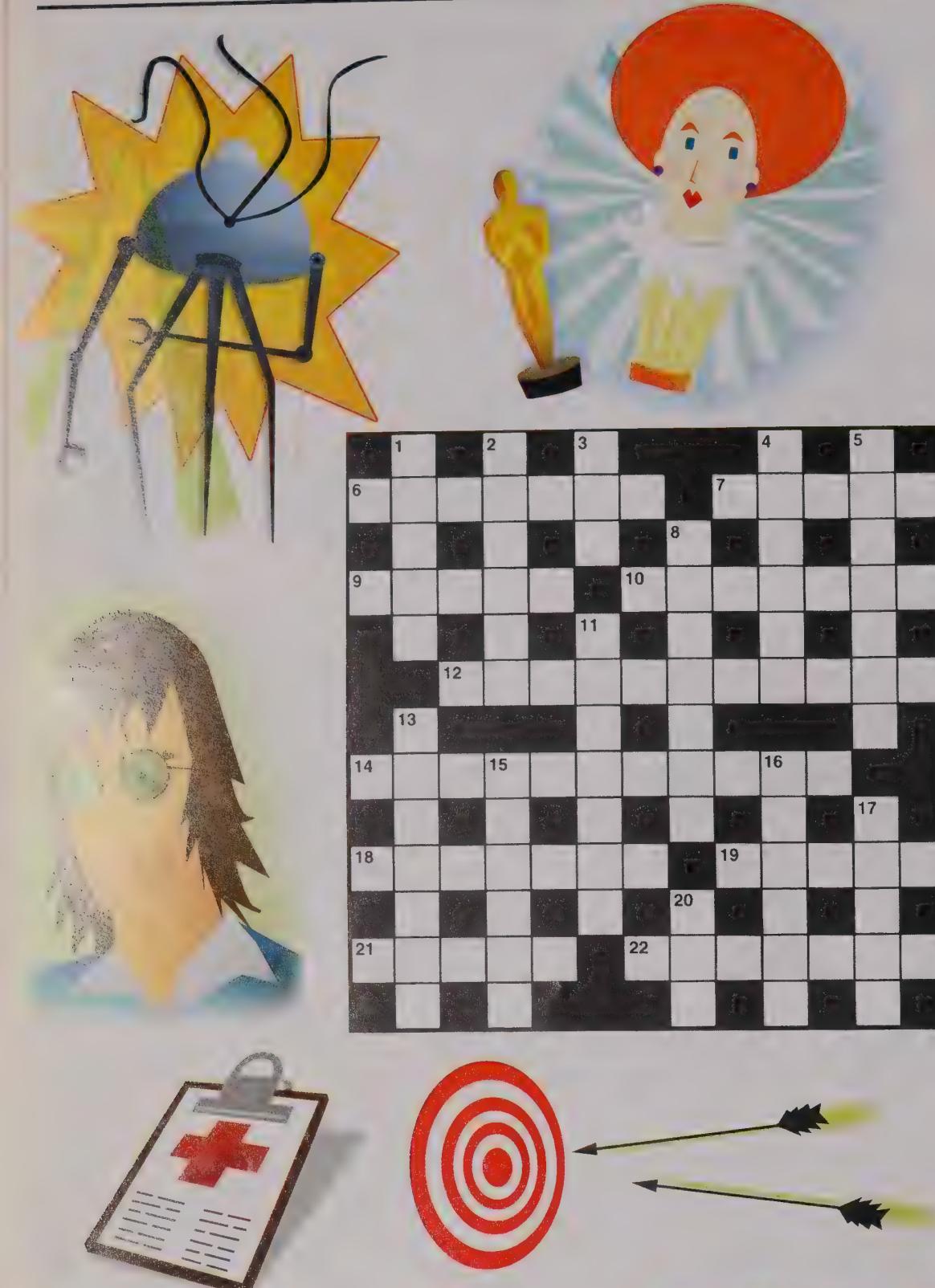
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ACROSS

- Arch of colours in the sky (7)
- She won an Oscar for playing Queen Elizabeth I in *Shakespeare In Love* (5)
- He appears to be on good terms with George W. Bush (5)
- Chief river of Ireland (7)
- Person who goes to a party without being invited (11)
- Health Secretary (4,7)
- And 17 down. They're too long for people expecting hospital treatment (7,5)
- Group whose hit singles include *Roll With It* and *Wonderwall* (5)
- He wrote *The War Of The Worlds* and *The Time Machine* (5)
- Card-game of Uruguayan origin (7)

DOWN

- And 4 down. Sue Gilroy won a Commonwealth Games gold medal recently for wheelchair _____ (5,6)
- Pain in the chest, owing to an inadequate blood supply to the heart (6)
- Weapon for shooting arrows (3)
- See 1 down.
- Vehicle which helps many disabled people (7)
- Winged, chubby children (7)
- Preliminary outlines for something that is to be made (7)
- Chopping tool used by butchers (7)
- Plant covered with stinging hairs (6)
- US president who had a close relationship with Margaret Thatcher (6)
- See 18 Across.
- Darren, who appeared on *I'm A Celebrity - Get Me Out Of Here!* (3)

CROSSWORD BY JIM MCLAREN
ILLUSTRATION BY SAM GILLESPIE
ANSWERS ON PAGE 40

CROSSWORD SPONSORED BY
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LEONARD CHESHIRE



Did you know?

Fairfields School in Northampton is one of few schools using Conductive Education methods to develop the skills of children with motor disorders or speech delay. The development of physical skills, other aspects of development including daily independence skills, problem solving and total communication also form a central part of this holistic approach.

From September 2002 we are extending our provision to include primary aged children in mainstream settings with physical disabilities who may benefit from one or two group sessions a week with a teacher / conductor who has received training at the Peto Institute in Hungary.

If you can identify children who would benefit from the expertise and excellent facilities we can offer at Fairfields please contact us at the address below.

Fairfields School
Trinity Avenue, Northampton,
NN2 6JN.

Headteacher: Mrs C Murray

Email: bursar@fairfields.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Tel: 01604 714777
Fax: 01604 714245



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<http://www.rmpic.co.uk/eduweb/sites/fairfields/index.html>

CANDID DAN

The rain's a pain, so Dan's off to Spain



Except for the new football season, things have been uneventful of late. With my double stint as best man over, the posh suits have been put away in favour of my more relaxed, regular attire, and my dirt digging skills have been retired. A tragedy. I shall miss the pomp, responsibility and free beer.

The typical (lousy) English weather has made days out somewhat of a nightmare too. Besides a delayed birthday treat to see Green Day, most efforts to venture anywhere have resulted in us resembling drowned rats or frozen penguins.

By mutual disdain at our pathetic climate, we're escaping to Spain for a week this month. To make our distant beacon of sun even brighter, we've plumped for an all-inclusive break, with all our food and drink thrown in. I'm looking forward to the novelty of just showing a plastic wristband and getting some food or a drink in return. Doubtless, said bands will be shown lots, but I'm making sure madam doesn't get any gin down her neck; it does weird things to her.

I've been warned not to get too fond of my new plastic friend or a favourite sunlounger as I'm informed we'll be taking a few day trips. My total agreement was met with complete surprise. I think she thought she was starting to become "the boss". No chance.

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Website

RADAR have posted the accommodation entries from the 2002 edition of *Holidays in Britain & Ireland: a Guide for Disabled People* on the internet. The site contains details on over 1,450 places to stay, with information on the accessibility and facilities for disabled guests, including adapted

toilets and special dietary needs.
www.radarsearch.org

Painsupport is a website offering support to people living with pain. The site provides information on pain management skills as used in NHS pain management courses, a discussion forum, regular

newsletter and a confidential contact club for people to share experiences.
www.painsupport.co.uk

MAGIC (Museums and Galleries in the Capital) have launched a new website giving details of events and facilities for deaf and hearing impaired people in London. Made

up of 14 members, including the British Museum, the National Gallery and Tate Modern, the site will give details of accessible programmes at London's museums and galleries, information on new access initiatives and the chance to give feedback on individual venues.
www.magicdeaf.org.uk

ATTENTION

DN cannot guarantee inclusion in a particular issue. Due to deadlines, please send details at the earliest opportunity.

DID YOU KNOW?

DN is available on tape, disk and by e-mail. Contact Talking Newspapers, see imprint, page 2.

Helpline

Parentline Plus is a charity which offers help and support for people with parenting concerns. It has a textphone service for deaf or hearing impaired people. Services include a 24-hour free, confidential helpline, parenting courses, workshops and group information leaflets. There is an interactive website and projects designed to support parents and carers, and general advice on parenting issues. Textphone: 0800 783 6783, website: www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Award

JobCentre Plus and Connexions/Prospects are sponsoring the Bromley & Croydon employer award scheme. The award is designed to recognise businesses of any size in Bromley or Croydon who have shown examples of good practice in the recruitment and/or retention of employees with disabilities. The deadline for nominations is 15 November. Nomination forms and details from Steve Davis, tel: 020 8313 9500 or Wendy Craddock, tel: 020 8465 2662.

DN WEBSITE UPDATE

The DN website discussion forum has been improved. To make it easier and quicker to communicate with other DN readers, we now have 16 forums covering:

- access • arts • communication
- education • employment
- equipment/technology
- finance • health & disabilities
- international topics
- legislation • leisure
- politics • social issues
- sport • transport & parking
- other topics.

So, why not visit and have your say!



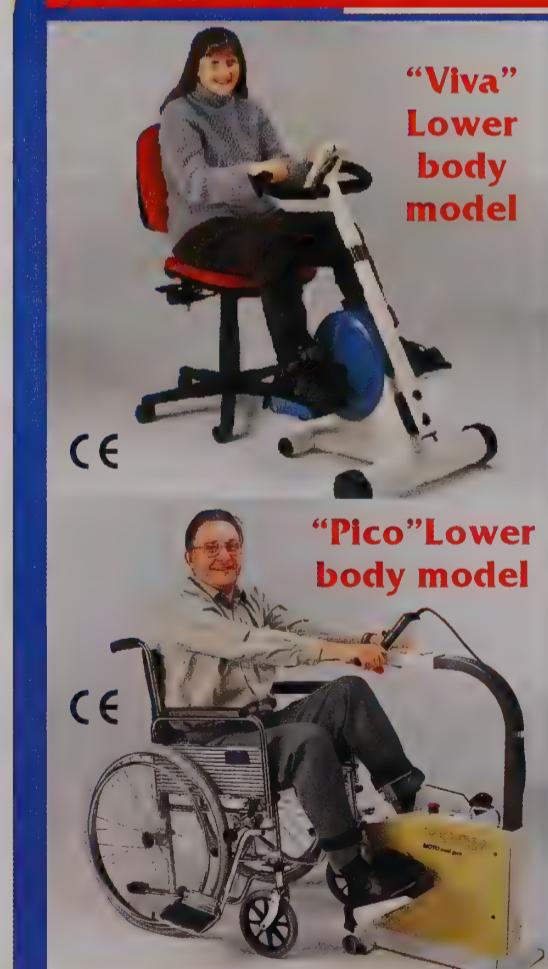
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- insufficient physical exercise
- oedemas
- osteoporosis
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What's On

Aston University will hold The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA): are you ready for 2004? 17 October, Lakeside Conference Centre, Aston University, Birmingham. Aimed at businesses, the conference will discuss how they can meet their obligations under the next part of the DDA's building regulations and codes of practice, part M building regulations and the BS8300 code of practice relating to inclusive design. Contact Helen Mallinson or Claire Wallis, tel: 0121 359 3611, email: h.mallinson@aston.ac.uk

The National Autistic Society (NAS) will hold First Time with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, 18 October, the Thistle Charing Cross Hotel, London. The seminar is aimed at mainstream teachers, learning support assistants and ancillary staff who are coming into contact with autistic spectrum disorders for the first time. The seminar will be hosted by Carol Povey, regional co-ordinator for Greater London for The National Autistic Society and Jacqui Ashton Smith, principal of Helen Allison School, Kent. £99 for professionals. Bookings must be received by 10 October. Contact the NAS conference booking office,

tel: 0115 911 3367, email: conference@nas.org.uk

Mac Keith Meetings will hold Cerebral Palsy and Health – Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Scope at the Royal Society of Medicine, Wimpole Street, London, 21 October, 9.30am-4.30pm. This open meeting is aimed at disabled people and health practitioners and will look at a wide number of issues including approaches to cerebral palsy and developments over the past 50 years, including life and health and movement strategies. Registration costs £10. Contact Melanie Armitage, tel: 020 7290 3934, fax: 020 7290 2898, email: mackeith@rsm.ac.uk

SPOD will hold Sexual Inclusion for Disabled People: exploring opportunities for real change, 21 October, the Novartis Foundation, 41 Portland Place, London. The day will include talks by disabled people, counsellors, doctors, advocates and others on the subject of sexual inclusion for disabled people and will offer examples of best practice as well as question and answer sessions. Contact Simon Parratt, tel: 020 7607 8851, email: spoduk@aol.com

Southampton Centre for Independent Living will hold

Barriers to People are Barriers to Business, 24 October, the Friends Provident St. Mary's Stadium, Southampton Football Club. Aimed at business leaders in the south, the conference will discuss the benefits of investing in and achieving a diverse workforce and customer base, financial gains from offering a more inclusive environment support, resources available and more. Tel: 023 8033 0982, email: b2b@southamptoncil.demon.co.uk

The National Association of Primary Care will hold their annual conference and exhibition, 30 and 31 October, G-Mex Convention Centre, Manchester. The conference will look at how the NHS can be rebuilt, creating primary care for the future and the national service framework for diabetes. Tel: 029 2088 7325, fax: 029 2088 8702, email: info@dwac.demon.co.uk

The Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health will hold Challenging the Boundaries, 5 and 6 November, Bristol. The forum will focus on protecting risk and users, social inclusion, mental health legislation and the interface between health and social care. It will ask how mental health professionals can push the boundaries of mental health care further. Contact Sarah Lord, tel:

020 7827 8384, email: sarah.lord@scmh.org.uk

Disability Wales will hold The Hidden Nation – a conference on identity, empowerment and disability in Wales, 9 November at Juries Hotel, Cardiff. The day will discuss the social model of disability, what it is and how it can be used by disabled people to challenge assumptions made about them. Bursaries for disabled people, groups or communities living in Wales are available to help attend the conference. Tel: 029 2088 7325, fax: 029 2088 8702, email: info@dwac.demon.co.uk

Kith and Kids will hold Behaviours That Challenge, 17 November, 229 Great Portland Street, London. The forum is aimed at carers, professionals and people with learning disabilities. It will look at the causes of challenging behaviour and approaches to dealing with them, including the use of medication and its benefits and side effects, as well as legal frameworks and agencies that can help people with learning disabilities. Tel: 020 8801 7432, email: sandra@kithandkids.co.uk

Prodisca will hold Protecting Disabled Children from Abuse: a new agenda for the 21st century, 22 November, Contact Sarah Lord, tel:

ORT House Conference Centre, 126 Albert Street, London NW1. The conference will look at areas including Government policy issues, protecting disabled children in school and residential settings and the Human Rights Act and disabled children. £160, £130 for registered charities. Contact In-Trac, tel/fax: 01428 641425, email: info@in-trac.co.uk

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE)

will hold its annual conference and exhibition at Birmingham International Convention Centre, 4 and 5 December. The conference will look at the future for NICE, implementation of national guidance, the involvement of patients in decision making and how the world has changed for patients. The conference and exhibition will be preceded by the International Health Technology Assessment and Guidelines conference, 3 December, which will look at European collaboration in health technology assessments and developing international guidelines. Contact Sterling Events, Tel: 0151 709 8979, email: niceregistration@sterlingevents.co.uk

Prodisca are seeking papers and workshops as part of I feel: I think, a two-day conference being held at Warwick University, 13 and 14 October 2003. The conference will address the vulnerability of disabled children to emotional abuse and neglect and will draw on research into attachment, resilience, self-esteem and identity and the consequences of ignoring these areas in child development. Papers and workshops are invited from people involved in promoting the emotional and psychological needs of disabled children, as well as young disabled people and adults and disabled and non-disabled professionals. Contact Margaret Kennedy, tel/fax/minicom: 020 8986 3010, email: mk@emkay-disab.demon.co.uk

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E-mail: patrick.durhammatthews@scope.org.uk

• Personal

LADY, 40s, LOVES travel, photography, galleries, outings, fashion and sunshine. N/s, very presentable, mobile, active, unhealthy, single, no family, seeks new friends similar. Waving not drowning! (Portsmouth area). Box no: 192

HUMOROUS EAST LONDON woman, slightly autistic, enjoys eating out and walks in the park. Seeks understanding man, maybe autistic? 37-49 for dates and possible relationship. Box no: 193

LONDON MALE 59 wlmt a girl for friendship and fun. I am disabled and lonely and need someone to talk to. Any replies answered. So, come on girls and drop me a line. Box no: 194

MY NAME IS Michael. I am a Christian astrologer (not professional). I have a rare type of dyslexia. Interests are history, old time dancing, piano, newspaper cuttings and steam engines. I am a young looking 52 and wlmt a lady, perhaps younger. I am 6 ft and slim. I live near Bishop's Stortford. Box no: 195

FEMALE, 35, BUCKS area, physically disabled, wheelchair and frame user. I have a good sense of humour, fun loving, enjoy company, wlmt caring, disabled man. Box no: 196

MALE 40 YR old, partially disabled with CP seeks female 30-45 for friendship, companionship and possible relationship. East Devon area. Enjoys getting out and about, using computers, watching tv, music and socialising. Box no: 197

• Cars/vans

CHAIRMAN ESCORT 1.3, auto, maroon. Fitted with Bekker hand controls, 1996 'N' 6k miles only, ramped rear ideal for carrying wheelchair, scooter passenger. Excellent condition. £4,950. Tel: 01630 652173 (North Midlands).

VW CARAVELLE 2.4TD Dec 97 (R), 24,500 miles, 12 month's MOT. Fsh, vgc, Ricon r/c underfloor side lift. Seat 6 + wheelchair - inc bench seat. Central locking, alarm, sun roof. £9,750. Tel: 020 8325 8469.

NISSAN PRAIRIE 1.5SGL, D reg, red, 94k miles, vgc, MOT april 2003. Alarmed Brotherwood conversion. £1,600 no offers. Tel: 01706 376022 (Lancashire).

ELAP SEAT £40, hand controls for automatic. £50. Tel: 020 8952 0071.

KIA SEDONA MPV, V reg, diesel, auto in metallic silver. 4 months warranty. Lowered floor offering 54" headroom. Ramp and electronic wheelchair securing. Luxury internal spec, excellent condition, home demonstration. £10,850 ono. Tel: 01484 451109.

NISSAN VANETTE 2.3D, N reg, blue, 31,500 miles, fsh, MOT Feb 2003. Wheelchair tracking, clamps, seatbelts and 3 removable passenger seats. Electric winch, rear vision ramp. 2 sunroofs. Excellent condition. £4,800. Tel: 01473 626871 (Suffolk).

VW CARAVELLE 2.5TD, T reg, short wheel base. Only 3,600 miles, rear entry ramp, central locking, pas, electric windows and wing mirrors. Room for wheelchair beside rear seat. Colorado colour. £14,500. Tel: 01623 515865.

V MERCEDES VITO 113, petrol, red, 24k miles, Widnes Versa conversion. Ramp + tracking. 4 seats + wheelchair clamps + seatbelt for wheelchair. Fsh, power steering, radio cassette. £12,995 ono. Tel: 01634 578418.

CHAIRMAN ESCORT VAN adapted to carry wheelchair. N reg, 18k miles, 11 month's MOT. £7,000. Tel: 02920 867428 or email: bedwas@zenar.co.uk

FORD TRANSIT 1991, five seats + wheelchair, Ratcliffe tail lift, Unwin clamps + seat belt. MOT December. £850 ono. Tel: 0114 2862993 (Sheffield).

ELAP ROTATING PASSENGER seat with head rest for use in Rover 75. As new. £350. Tel: 01964 650271 (near Hull).

FIAT FIORINO 1.3, G reg, winch and ramp. Mot March 2003, 49k miles. Unleaded, economical. Offers. Tel: 01384 860779.

VW SHARAN 1.9TDI. Fully wheelchair accessible from rear tailgate conversion from new. W registration, August 2000 with 15 months unlimited mileage warranty left. Pearlescent effect Indigo Blue metallic paint. Rare 7 seater or 6 with wheelchair. Air conditioned, alloy wheels, immaculate condition. 41 mpg, 61k miles. Cost £28,000, will accept £13,995. Tel Ian: 07950 404950 or email: ianmcdonald@hotmail.com

PROTON PERSONA 16XLI 5 door hatch 97R, auto, metallic grey, electric windows and mirrors, power steering, alloy wheels. 12k miles only, Guidosimplex hand controls, immobiliser, 1 year's MOT/manufacturer's warranty. Immaculate condition. £3,500 ono. Tel: 01793 338692.

ELSWICK ENVOY SALOON, blue, F reg, 998 cc, 12,329 miles, petrol. Only 2 owners, seats 2 people, wheelchair driver and passenger behind. Asking price - £1,700. For more details, tel: Emrys Llewelyn: 01239 581555 (Lampeter, West Wales).

FORD COURIER 1.3, auto, 1995 M reg. 24k miles, Constables rear access conversion winched. Chair entry, ramp, 2 rear seats, power steering. Red, MOT February 2003. £5,500. Tel: 01482 811490.

FORD GALAXY GLX 2.3, auto, Nov 97 R. Nicely adapted by Automotive Group 5 full seats and wheelchair. Low floor w/integral ramp. 4 inertia webbing wheelchair clamps and safety belt. 180° swivel Cpts chairs. All elecs. Cassette/radio. Air/con. 50k miles. £9,950. Tel: 0151 342 7573 (space out as shown here).

LANDROVER DISCOVERY V81A, petrol, 65,636 miles, k reg april '93, 3528cc. New MOT, good condition. Hydraulic lift for wheelchair user, tailgate door, pas, central locking, automatic, air conditioned, electric windows. Regular serviced, seats 3 + wheelchair and user. 2 owners, to buy new £32,000, asking £8,000 ono. Tel: 020 8856 7694 (London SE3).

MERCEDES BENZ 250 turbo, diesel estate elegance, R reg, auto, 1997, 84k miles. Lots of extras, roof bars, air conditioning, electric windows and mirrors. Cd, hand controls fitted for brake, accelerator and indicators. Mot, parts and service history. £10,250. Tel: 01706 225229 (Lancs).

ELSWICK ENVOY SALOON, red, A reg, 998 cc. 61,590 miles, petrol. Only 2 owners, seats 2 people, wheelchair driver and passenger behind. Asking price - £1,500. For more details, tel: Emrys Llewelyn: 01239 581555 (Lampeter, West Wales).

CHAIRMAN CITROEN BERLINGO, Gowrings conversion, X reg, 18k miles, lowering suspension. Seats 4 plus wheelchair. Excellent condition, electric windows and air conditioning. Service history. £12,000. Tel: 020 8204 0934.

VOLKSWAGEN CARAVELLE, G reg, Invatravel conversion, only 2 owners. Just under 44k miles, automatic. New MOT, Seats 5 plus room for wheelchair. Interbility HBC200 electric wheelchair lift, power steering, electric windows and central locking. Sun roof with blinds. Full service history. Cost £8,750 second hand, asking £3,950. Tel: 0151 920 1260 or 07710 896575.

CHAIRMAN ASTRA VAN 1300 cc, E reg, only 48k miles, 2 owners, red. MOT expires May 2003. £500 ono. Tel: 01482 781876 (Hull area).

ELAP ROTATING CAR seat for ford Escort mark 7. Left hand passenger. 2 door, grey trim. As new, £150. Tel: 01246 412174.

NISSAN PRAIRIE 1.8SGL, E reg, Brotherwood conversion front passenger seat with transfer beam. MOT June 2003, tax December 2002. £1,000 ono. Tel: 01935 851104.

FORD FOCUS 1.8, 1999, 39K miles. Constables hydraulic carchair system including electric chair. Excellent condition. Cost £18k, accept £11k. Tel: 0161 439 5250 (Cheshire).

RENAULT EXTRA 1.4RN, P reg, MOT, 44K Miles. 3 seats plus wheelchair ramped rear access. Vgc, £5,995 ono - must sell. Tel: 01527 527579 (Worcestershire).

ELAP ROTATION CONVERSION kit for Ford Fiesta mark 4. Cost £400, asking price £100. Tel: 07939 223526 (Norwich).

CHAIRMAN CITROEN DISPATCH 1.9 with power steering, X reg, 11k miles, lowered floor with hydraulic lowering rear suspension. Electric inertia wheelchair securing system, 2 mid-section seats and room for wheelchair passenger. £14,700 ono. Tel: 01986 781635 or 07771 740515.

RENAULT EXTRA, DIESEL, J reg. Atlas conversion pull down ramp and Quicklock clamps. Carries 4 people + wheelchair. Long MOT. White. Very good condition. £1,550. Tel: 01923 262222 or 07836 227563.

• Wheelchairs/scooters

SHOPRIDER POWER CHAIR, literally brand new because of use of second wheelchair (motorised). Cost £2,400, accept £1,000. Tel: 020 8801 6858.

RE ASSIST MANUAL tilt 18" transit wheelchair, adjustable. As new, purchase price £1,575, asking price £900. Tel: 01483 301999 (evenings).

LEVO STAND-UP wheelchair. Stand by the touch of a button. Electric battery charger. £200. Tel: 01570 470125.

• Household/family

BATH LIFT, NEPTUNE, working, £140. Tel: 01376 562242 or email: alhyd@aol.com

BATH BUDDY LIFT used 3 times. Warranty to 26.03.05, paid £692.50, accept £250. Also, Bathknight, reconditioned October 2000. Tel Julia: 0797 001 8538 (Worcs or London).

CRAFTMATIC 4' 6" ADJUSTABLE bed with massage system, under 2 years old. Hardly used due to change in circumstances. Cost over £3,000, will accept £950. Tel: 01707 320419 (Herts).

SINGLE 3 FT wide, 6 ft long adjustable type bed and mattress with castors and remote control. Clean and fully working. Buyer to collect form near Rotherham, £250. Tel: 01709 581581.

• Accommodation

SOUTH OF FRANCE winter warmth. New fully accessible house, 3 to 4 beds, English lady owner next door. Near Carcassonne via Stansted direct or motorail to Narbonne. Tel: 0033 468788761 or 01953 452145.

CHARMING COTSWOLD STONE cottage, 3 beds, ff, wheelchair adapted terraced house in Cirencester. Gch, double glazed, communal gardens, Terrylift, wheelchair shower room. Located 500 yds from town centre in quiet one-way street. Available for long term let or sale. For further info, tel Niv/Sheena on: 01285 862390.

• Wanted

CHRYSLER GRAND VOYAGER with conversion for wheelchair passenger. Low mileage, fsh. Tel: 01264 324471 (Andover).

ACT OR ELITE wheelchair. Contact Tom: 01327 350378.

FIAT FIORINO 1700 diesel or similar, access headroom 60". About £4,000 in V.G.C. Phone 01792 556531 6pm to 8pm.

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Please use this form if you are a private individual and want to place a classified advertisement (not Personal adverts). Write clearly in block capitals. Remember to allow a space between words. Use each space in the line even if you have to split words at the end.

Choose an advert style from far right. Send this coupon with your name, address, daytime telephone number and a cheque for the total made payable to
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- Standard linage advert
- Semi-display linage advert
- Box linage advert

• Recruitment (on pages 42 to 46)



Social Care Institute for Excellence

SCIE is a new, high profile charity dedicated to improving the quality of social care services across England and Wales and potentially Northern Ireland.

Funded by government as one of the partners in the Social Care Quality Programme, we work closely with others nationally and internationally to create a knowledge base of what works best in social care and to make sure that it is used to improve services.

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If you would like to join us and think you meet our requirements, please contact the 24-hour recruitment line for a copy of the information pack and application form on (020) 7089 6884 quoting the job title, or email us at recruitment@scie.org.uk. CVs will not be accepted.

The closing date for applications is Friday 11th October.

For further information and to download an application form please refer to our website: www.scie.org.uk

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1998 S Daihatsu Mobility, 6,000 miles ramps & winch	£4,995
1998 S Ford Courier Universal, 32,000 miles, winch	£8,495
1998 S Escort Chairman, 14,000 miles, P.A.S. & lowering suspension	£9,500
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1998 R Miniature Alhambra Auto, raised roof - winch, 25,000 miles	£18,500
1998 P Fiat Diesel, 1 owner, 5,000 miles captain chair	£7,750
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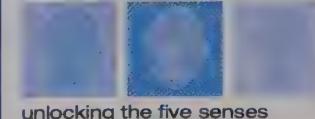
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VW Sharan S 2.0 Petrol, 1999, T Red, 19k miles, 5 seater with lowered floor at rear & fixed ramp.	£8,995
VW Transporter 800S 1.9TD, 1998 S, Red, 49k miles, Lewis Reed WAV Conversion.	£10,495
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Interplay Theatre is committed to a policy of Equal Opportunities. Charity registration no. 1001229

• Open Day



Join us at deafconnect for our 'Grand opening day'!

After weeks of building work, dust and chaos, we are proud to announce the launch of deafconnect and our new service provision.

To celebrate we are holding an Open Day on Wednesday 9th October, starting at 10 am and continuing into the evening.

There will be stalls, exhibitions and demonstrations from many different people. There will also be events in the evening.

So come and join us on this exciting day!

For more information, please contact: Information Officer:

voice/textphone: 01604 233440 fax: 01604 239041

info@deafconnect.org.uk www.deafconnect.org.uk

deafconnect is the working name of Northants & Rutland Mission to the Deaf

Registered Charity 208164

• Conference

the arts in wales and visual impairment

a conference organised by
wales council for the blind

31 october
north wales conference centre
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COURSES

To advertise your vacancies or courses please contact Richard, tel: 020 7619 7336, or Patrick, tel: 020 7619 7320, or contact them both on fax: 020 7619 7331, minicom: 020 7619 7332. They can go on the web as well!

• Recruitment (on pages 42 to 46)

Employment Support for Disabled People

The Jobcentre Plus network can provide advice on employment and job retention to disabled people who are facing additional employment barriers associated with their disability.

Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs) are usually based in Jobcentres or Jobcentre Plus offices and can provide:

- employment assessment
- job seeking advice and support
- information on specialist employment programmes for disabled people
- advice on remaining in work
- advice and information to employers employing disabled people

For more information on the support available to disabled people looking for work get in touch with your local Jobcentre or Jobcentre Plus office.



JobCentre

jobcentreplus

Part of the Department for Work and Pensions



Design Options for a Versatile Environment

D.O.V.E a housing and independent living organisation managed by disabled people based in Portsmouth Hampshire require a

Development and Operations Manager

Salary £25k pa 37 hour week

for the strategic development of the organisation. You will be setting up a disabled persons accommodation register amongst other tasks.

Interested?

For an application form

Please contact D.O.V.E 85 Northern Rd, Portsmouth, Hampshire. Tel/fax: 02392 787788 Email: Admin@d-o-v-e.org We welcome applications from disabled people.

Closing date: Monday 28th October 2002.

• Grants



LONDON ARTS

Planning an arts project?

Applications are invited to the second round of London Arts' 2002/3 Development Fund:

**Circus Combined Arts Dance
Literature Music Theatre
Visual Arts Bursaries Residencies
Regional Arts Lottery Awards**

We seek to support the work of disabled artists and that which reflects London's cultural diversity.

For more information: telephone 020 7608 6100, textphone 020 7608 4101, email info@lonab.co.uk or visit our website at www.arts.org.uk/londonarts

Conditions

Disability Now maintains the right to amend or withdraw lineage adverts without prior notice. All adverts must comply with the British Code of Advertising Practice.

Telephone numbers and addresses will not be placed in personal adverts, for confidentiality. Instead, Box numbers will be provided. Likewise, telephone numbers and addresses will not be given out over the telephone if requested.

Box Numbers can be requested for non-personal adverts. However, it may limit the response to it. If you want to advertise documents, goods or services contact Patrick Durham-Matthews (tel: 020 7619 7320), fax: 020 7619 7331.

Lineage adverts can only be used by private individuals. All commercial enquiries must be addressed to Richard Gresham (see contact details above).

DN cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage of adverts or letters during forwarding. It is the responsibility of the advertiser to check the content of their advert, and to ensure any abbreviations cannot be misunderstood.

• Personal

 **Handigate** Introduction Agency
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SOUTH YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT

EXECUTIVE

The Transport Executive is responsible for securing and promoting the best possible transport network for the people of South Yorkshire.

We believe we can only achieve our vision if we make full use of the talents and resources of all our employees. The Transport Executive is fully committed to providing an environment which eliminates unfair discrimination and which actively promotes productive working relationships based on the unique contributions of different individuals within our organisation.

For details of our current vacancies please call our recruitment line on 0114 221 1223

Disability Equality Training Officer

**Full time post – 2 year contract
Salary: £18,358 - £21,710 (NJC SCP 26-31)**



Well established, dynamic local organisation of disabled people requires Disability Equality Training Officer to manage an exciting new project promoting social inclusion and equal opportunities for people with physical and/or sensory disability in Devon. The work will focus on identifying and addressing barriers to learning, self development and access to local services. Delivery of a high quality disability equality training and access audit service to external organisations will challenge attitude and improve services in line with current legislation (Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Human Rights Act 2000)

Candidates must demonstrate, through work experience or equivalent:

- Excellent understanding of and empathy with wide range of disability and equality issues
- Sound knowledge of legislation relating to disability and access
- Competent training skills with recognised training qualification or equivalent
- Excellent communication, negotiation and presentation skills
- Self motivation and commitment to service development
- Leadership and organisational skills
- Ability to travel within Devon and regionally/nationally where appropriate

Closing date: **18th October 2002** Interview date: **31st October 2002**

Applications from disabled people are actively encouraged. Job share welcome. Project supported by the Learning and Skills Council. Living Options Devon is an Equal Opportunities Employer. Registered Charity No. 1079649

For application form and details contact:-

Living Options Devon, Ashclyst Centre, Hospital Lane, Exeter EX1 3RB
Email: livopsdev@aol.com

• Holiday

GAER COTTAGES

"HOLIDAY CARE AWARD WINNERS" Quality self-catering cottages for ALL the family with an emphasis on facilities for disabled visitors. 6 of the 9 traditional Welsh stone cottages are single storey, easily accessible from the car park. Luxurious indoor heated swimming pool with hoist. Games room. Open ALL YEAR. Visit us at www.selfcateringinwales.co.uk or ring for a 2003 brochure

RICHARD & LINDA BURGESS
01570 470275

HOLIDAY BUNGALOWS BUILT FOR DISABLED PEOPLE
IN THE PARKLAND GROUNDS OF STRODE PARK, HERNE, KENT
OVERHEAD TRACKING, ELECTRIC HOISTS, HI/LO BEDS, FULLY EQUIPPED brochure from STRODE PARK FOUNDATION HERNE CT6 7NE 01277 373292 FAX 742805 e-mail info@strodepark.org.uk OPEN ALL YEAR ROUND

ALGARVE - PORTUGAL
Disabled facilities, B&B, car hire, adapted vehicles, adapted equipment to see and do. Tel: 01277 373292 Fax: 01277 3736 E-mail: dave@player.pt www.player.pt

COSTA DEL SOL
Wheelchairs, Electric scooters, bath & WC seats commodes and more for hire
T: 01375 377246 F: 01375 405861 MobilityAbroad
www.mobilityabroad.co.uk

Brittany Cottage to let. Fully adapted for wheelchair use. Good access to beaches. Sleeps up to 6. Details C. Hodgson. Tel (01924) 499220.

Norfolk, Nar Valley Holiday Cottages
3 self-catering, all wheelchair accessible, 1 with wheelchair in shower room, 2 with airbaths. Mostly en-suite. On working farm - peaceful location, central for beaches and tourist attractions. Indoor heated swimming pool. Also B&B. More details and prices, contact: Rosemary on 01760 338797.

PENROSE BURDEN NORTH CORNWALL "Holiday Care Award Winners" Holiday Cottages designed for wheelchair users and their families. Rural setting with superb views. Dogs welcome. Wood burning stoves and daily meal service. Please ring or write for colour brochure. R.N.B. Hall, Penrose Burden, St. Buryan, Bodmin, Cornwall PL13 4LZ. Telephone Bodmin 01208 850277 or 850617

CUMBERLAND A peaceful beauty spot. The Tranquill Otter Lakeshore Lodges 5 cosy lodges (1 accessible), 2 luxury lodges (both accessible) with a sauna, whirlpool bath, log burner etc. Lakeside paths, lake (via wheely boat) and ship all accessible. Resident Otters. Own rowing boat. 01228 576661. www.the-tranquill-otter.co.uk

ROYAL DEESIDE SCOTLAND
NEW for 2002, 4 superb self catering cottages located on the banks of the river next to Balmoral. Designed and equipped to the highest standard with state of the art facilities for people with disabilities, their families and friends. Please contact CRATHIE OPPORTUNITY HOLIDAYS Tel: 013397 42100 for more details or email: info@crathieholidays.org.uk www.crathieholidays.org.uk

ODDICOMBE HALL HOTEL
Provides an excellent holiday for the disabled person and their family. We have full disabled facilities and are able to cater for organised parties. All wheelchair accessible rooms open on to a private garden with conservatory and have breathtaking sea views. Private car park with unloading at entrance to the hotel. Open all year. Why not escape and relax at delightful Babacombe, Torquay? Category 2. Special 3-4 day breaks Nov-April. Discount for group bookings. Tel: (01803) 313457.

Newlands Country House B&B, Suffolk
Purpose built grade 1 wheelchair accessible suites, 4 diamonds. All rooms en-suite, tv. Ample carparking. Nov - 4 nights for the price of 3 excluding Sat. For details tel: 01502 722164. www.newlands@southwold.com

• Recruitment (on pages 42 to 46)

SHADOW CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE HEALTH PROTECTION AGENCY



This is a demanding and exciting opportunity for an outstanding executive to lead a major new public body 'The Health Protection Agency' which is being established by The Department of Health, as part of its strategy for health protection. It is anticipated that it will come into being on 1st April 2003, and will be tasked with shaping and delivering policies on national infection control and health protection.

The new Agency will be a multi-site organisation and will bring together the functions currently performed by a number of separate organisations within the NHS and elsewhere including: The Public Health Laboratory Service; The National Radiological Protection Board; The Centre for Applied Microbiology and Research; and The National Focus for Chemical Incidents.

Leading an organisation still in its formative stages, you will work with the Shadow Non-Executive Chairman and members to appoint senior officers to the Agency. You will develop codes of practice and effective working methods, and ensure that the process of transition (encompassing staff transfers and the development of finance and IT systems) is a smooth one. Importantly, you will be the Accounting Officer to Parliament.

To take on this unusual and challenging role, we envisage that you will need to demonstrate:

- A proven track record of providing strong and dynamic leadership probably at Chief Executive level
- Sensitive political awareness in order to steer the process of change in a major organisation
- A clear ability to formulate and develop strategy and to translate strategic objectives into operational performance internally and through external partnerships including the World Health Organisation, the NHS and major government departments
- An understanding of UK and international health protection issues
- The personal and professional presence needed to build effective relationships.

The remuneration package will be commensurate with the seniority of the post and the qualifications of the candidate.

The site for the Headquarters for the HPA has yet to be decided but relocation expenses will be payable if necessary.

For further written details and an application pack, please contact Siobhan Markey (our representative at CPG, our retained recruitment consultancy) on 020 7562 1653, fax 020 7588 8013, email dh@centrepointrgroup.co.uk or write to CPG, 16 St Helens Place, London EC3A 6DP, quoting reference number 563. Alternatively you can apply online at www.centrepointrgroup.co.uk

Closing date for receipt of applications 4th October 2002.

Interviews are scheduled to take place in London on Tuesday 29th October 2002 and an assessment centre for shortlisted candidates will be held week commencing 14th October also in London.

The Department of Health welcomes applications regardless of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation. A guaranteed interview scheme is available for people with disability who meet the minimum criteria for appointment.

Disability Action in the Borough of Barnet

SENIOR ADVISOR/OFFICE MANAGER

Part-time: 30 hours per week

Salary: £21,500 - £22,500 p.a on a pro-rata basis plus 5% pension from year 2

We are a successful organisation managed by disabled people, providing information, advice and advocacy, counselling and psychotherapy and befriending to disabled people in the Borough of Barnet. We also run the very successful Barnet Independent Living Agency.

We are recruiting for a senior adviser/office manager who will be expected to:

- Have at least two years experience of managing staff as well as advising service users and carrying out casework.
- Have in depth knowledge of disability benefits and disability issues.
- Be highly motivated with excellent communication skills.

For an application form please contact:
DabB, 954 High Road, North Finchley, London N12 9RX

Tel: 020 8446 6935 • Fax: 020 8446 3763

• Minicom: 020 8343 7632 • Email: disability@dabb.org.uk

Application form also available on disc in Word format and via email.

Disabled people are encouraged to apply.

Closing date: Monday 21st October 2002

Interview date: Monday 28th October 2002

Disability Action Waltham Forest

Deputy Director, 36 hours a week, salary sep 32

£23,109.00p incl. Outer London Weighting.

28 days holidays per year.

We need an enthusiastic, self-starter to fill the role of Deputy Director. We are a growing user led local disability group working to advance the rights of our members. The work is varied and interesting, working in a friendly team used to working flexibly to a common aim.

The person we are looking for will be working in a multi-cultural environment, have substantial experience of the voluntary sector and managing projects.

They will have a reasonable knowledge of Community Care legislation and how it applies to our members.

They will have excellent communication skills and be used to working to deadlines. Personal experience of disability would be an advantage.

For information or an application pack please contact:
Pat Bhabha, Director, Disability Action Waltham Forest,
1A Warner Road, Walthamstow, E17 7DY.

Tel: 020 8509 0812.

Closing date for applications:
Friday 1st November 2002.



"I'd like to work with children"

Click on:

www.ChildcareJobs.co.uk

...the direct connection to jobs in the childcare sector

DEADLINES

November 2002 classified deadlines: Booking: 11 October. Copy: 15 October.

- Recruitment (on pages 42 to 46)

Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (England) Commissioners

Empowering Patients and the Public

The Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health is a new national independent organisation that will give patients and the public a powerful voice in the NHS of the future. From January 2003, this key public body will be responsible for empowering individuals and communities to influence decisions about matters affecting their health.

Up to ten outstanding people are now sought to serve as Commissioners. Together, they will shape and develop the organisation, establish a unique national system for patient and public involvement, develop the Commission's strategic direction and drive its exciting new agenda as the champion of the consumer's interests in the NHS.

The Commission will be based in Birmingham.

The posts

For these important national positions we are looking for people who share our commitment to empowering patients and the public to influence decisions that effect them and their communities.

You will have a wide range of experience relevant to the Commission's work which might include working within the community, tackling health inequalities or using management, communication or financial skills.

You will now be ready to bring these experiences to the national stage and be able to demonstrate the skills and confidence to contribute at this level.

Remuneration

Appointments will be for two years in the first instance, with a time commitment of around 2½ days a month, which may include evenings and weekends. Remuneration will be £5,305 pa.

For further written details and an application form please call 0113 394 2999 or email info@apcomm.nhs.uk, quoting reference NAT004.

The closing date for receipt of applications is 17 October 2002.



The NHS Appointments Commission welcomes applications regardless of gender, faith, race, disability or sexual orientation. A guaranteed interview scheme is available for disabled candidates who meet the essential criteria for appointment. The Commission is committed to the principle of public appointments based on merit with independent assessment, openness and transparency of process.

www.sector1.net for more vacancies being filled by the NHS Appointments Commission.



Appointments Commission

Tower Hamlets is a distinctive, unique London Borough that is home to a diverse vibrant, multicultural community. As part of an exciting regeneration programme, we aim to improve the quality of life for all who live and work in the area. It's also an ideal opportunity to further your career.

Social Services

Senior Practitioner

PO3 £28,119-£30,363

Adult Services

(Physical Disabilities Group)

Disabilities Resource Centre for Adults, Southern Grove

The Physical Disabilities Team undertakes Borough-wide Assessments, Care Plans, Monitoring and Reviews for over 700 users of the service.

A Fast Response Duty/Assessment Group handles the screening and initial assessment of approximately 35 new referrals per month, presenting the initial outcome to a Referrals Action Group consisting of colleagues from Occupational Therapy, Housing, Hospitals, and other Health colleagues including the Disability Options Team. The Senior Practitioner will be responsible for day to day support of this Group within the Team. The Team consists of a Team Manager, Senior Practitioner, 6.5 w.t.e. Care Managers and Team Admin Workers.

The Team have recently been re-located, together with the Sensory Disability Team, Advocacy Services and short-term Emergency, Assessment, and Residential Respite Facilities, at the Disability Resource Centre for Adults, near Mile End Station, which also houses the Disabilities Information Training Opportunities Service (D.I.T.O.) and a Cafè with Internet access.

For further details regarding the post, please contact Kathy Taylor, Principal Manager on 0207 364 5853

Closing date 11 October 2002.

For an application pack, please call 020 7364 4488 (24 Hour Recruitment Line). A special Minicom service is available for those with a hearing or speech impairment on 020 7364 4489. Please quote the appropriate reference number.

We shall ensure fairness and equal opportunities throughout our workforce and in service delivery. We welcome applications from suitably skilled candidates regardless of ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, religion or age.

A Workforce to Reflect the Community, Committed to Positive Action.

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk



The Opportunities are endless...

Harrow College prides itself on its successful Sixth Form Centre and Lifelong Learning Centres, supplying courses and programmes to suit both our student's needs and those of the local community.

We are always looking to recruit innovative, self-motivated and dedicated lecturing and administration staff to work across the College, and help us maintain the high standards that we've set at our "Centre of excellence".

To receive regular details of our current lecturing or administration vacancies please write to Human Resources, Harrow College, Lowlands Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 3AQ quoting 'Mailing List' or visit www.harrow.ac.uk

Harrow College is an Equal Opportunities Employer

Come check us out!

Putting people first and tailoring services to their needs

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Building an Inclusive Society –

Promoting Equal Opportunities for all people in employment

"We're looking for talented and enthusiastic people, especially in our hard to recruit areas, such as IT, Social Services, and new drivers."

Contact us at:

www.salford.gov.uk/jobs/

Tel: 0161 909 6503

Minicom: 0161 909 6527



Salford City of

• Contracts & Tender

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SALFORD

CORPORATE SERVICES – FSG CENTRAL PURCHASING

TENDER FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A CONSULTANT TO CARRY OUT ACCESS AUDITS OF THE CITY OF SALFORD'S EDUCATIONAL PREMISES.

Tenders are invited for the appointment of a consultant to carry out access audits of the Authority's educational premises comprising Early Learning Centres, Primary and Secondary Schools. Approximately 100 premises will potentially require such an audit.

The closing date for return of completed tender documents for consideration has been set as Monday 14th October 2002 (2pm).

To obtain copies of the tender documents, please contact Terry Harrisson, Purchasing Manager, FSG-Central Purchasing, Corporate Services Directorate, Civic Centre, Chorley Road, Swinton, Salford M27 5AW.

Telephone No: 0161 793 3220,

Fax No: 0161 793 3348.

Email: terry.harrisson@salford.gov.uk

Salford City of

Transport for London



Influence change in transport

TfL, based in Victoria, is the organisation responsible for delivering integrated transport across the Capital – a role that already touches the lives of millions of Londoners and visitors. Now we are committed to go further and develop a transport system that is socially inclusive. This is the goal that is owned by the Social Inclusion team, where we will be working on behalf of people who may currently experience problems in using the transport system for a wide range of reasons, from access to communication, language barrier or harassment and personal security. It's about making realistic improvements and changing perceptions. Getting people to engage with transport and therefore engage with London. If you want to deal with real life issues in a very customer-focused role, with the chance to improve lives of thousands of Londoners, then joining our team will give you the perfect opportunity. The Social Inclusion team performs a strategic function across TfL and supports its businesses to deliver better services for London's whole population.

Social Investigation Manager £40,000

Co-ordinating, devising and implementing research programmes, you'll find out exactly why people are excluded from the transport system. It's a fantastic opportunity to do real hands-on investigation across TfL and to see the positive results. The information you provide will be used to inform our thinking on inclusion and implement change in transport. To take advantage, you must be a very proactive researcher – someone who has absolute confidence in their research skills and the ability to use information to influence dynamic change. In addition to a proven track record in social research and, as a strategic thinker, you'll need knowledge of other research in this area and a sound understanding of relevant legislation and civil rights. Knowledge of computer graphics would also be useful. Ref: TFL295/D

Social Investment and Delivery Manager £40,000

Focusing on the big picture, you'll make sure projects are progressing effectively and ensure all modes of transport have a common goal. When projects involve more than one business unit, you'll look for compatibility between the business units' inclusion goals and outputs. If a setback occurs, you'll work to overcome it. You must a logical, pragmatic systems thinker – someone with a good technical ability and a sound general knowledge of London's transport system. You'll make sure that we re-visit our standards with inclusion firmly on everyone's agenda. You might well have a background in engineering or design, but what's most important is that you're dynamic, strategic and have the ability to resolve issues methodically. Ref: TFL296/D

Social Impact Manager £40,000

Your main purpose in this role will be to assess the quality of people's travelling experiences. It's a customer-focused role that will see you carrying out qualitative analysis and working closely with all of our business units. You'll find out if today's issues are resolved and work proactively to anticipate future challenges. Your focus on impact will inform the way we deliver our services tomorrow. Excellent communication skills are essential, as is an ability to understand the social issues which effect London's diverse population.

To succeed in any of these roles, you'll need at least 3 years' relevant managerial experience. A sound knowledge of equality, diversity and complex social issues is essential as is a purposeful approach to change. The ability to communicate in a language other than English, including British Sign Language, would be an additional advantage. Ref: TFL297/D

PA to the Head of Social Inclusion £28,000

As well as proven evidence of diary management and organisational skills, you will have good PC skills and the ability to read complex documents and summarise key points. A demonstrable commitment to equality and social inclusion is essential and you must be able to interact positively with others at every level, within the organisation and with our customers. Audio typing skills would be an advantage. Ref: TFL294/D

To apply, call 020 7941 4698 or email hrcorporate@tfl.gov.uk for an application form quoting the correct reference.

Closing date: 18th October 2002.

Transport for London values the diversity which exists in our city and aspires to this being reflected in our workforce.

MAYOR OF LONDON

ACCESSABILITY LOTHIAN

An experienced MANAGER is required for a dynamic, disability-led organisation focused on the educational inclusion of disabled people. AAL is at the forefront of providing educational guidance, development and training, based on the social model of disability.

Salary: P01 (SCP 35-39) £23930 - £26801

Closing date: noon - Monday 7 October 2002

Interview dates: 30 and 31 October 2002

Details (in accessible formats) from: Access Ability Lothian, Norton Park, 57 Albion Road, Edinburgh EH7 5QY

Tel/Minicom: 0131 475 2300

e-mail: info@accessabilitylothian.com

DEADLINES

November 2002 classified

deadlines: Booking: 11

October. Copy: 15 October.

DISCLAIMER

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BRITISH COUNCIL OF DISABLED PEOPLE
(BCODP)

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (NCIL)

NCIL is currently a project of BCODP. NCIL is funded mainly by the Department of Health to promote direct payments nationally.

INFORMATION OFFICER

To promote a specialised information service on topics related to direct payments and independent living, including producing our newsletter.

DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

To develop good practice nationally in the implementation of direct payments to ensure all disabled people have access to them, including where take-up has been poor.

Both the above posts are 35 hours pw, initially funded to March 2003, and Grade SO2 (£24347-£25616(award pending)). (Including London weighting).

WIDER OPTIONS RESEARCH/DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (35 hours pw)

WIDER OPTIONS ADMINISTRATOR (17.5 hours pw)

Wider Options is a 15-month project to research and develop alternatives to direct payments which still offer disabled and older people choice and control over personal assistance. Both posts are on 15-month contracts, the Research/Development Officer at Grade SO1/2 (£22415-£25616(award pending)) and the Administrator at Scale 4 (£16409-£17987(award pending)). (Both including London weighting).

Disabled people are required for all posts. Job share available. Closing date – 16th October. Application packs available in accessible formats from Barry Clarke, 250 Kennington Lane, London SE11 5RD.

Phone: 020 7587 1663 • Fax: 020 7582 2469 • Minicom: 0207 587 1177 • email: ncil@ncil.org.uk



Equalities Training Development Officer (Job Share considered) (NJC 30 - £20,443 + pension, award pending)

Essex Coalition of Disabled People (ECDP) is a local organisation run and controlled by disabled people. Over the last three years we have developed a highly successful disability equality training service. We currently provide training to staff from Essex Social Services, local NHS Trusts and a wide range of other statutory and voluntary organisations in the area.

We are looking to recruit an experienced trainer to add to our team. The person concerned must be committed to promoting the disability rights agenda and be experienced in all aspects relating to the preparation, marketing and delivery of training.

This position is funded by Essex Learning Skills Council / ESF for an initial period of 18 months, but will hopefully be renewed, subject to successful applications for further funding. This post is open to disabled people only.

To receive an information pack and application form please contact the address below quoting Ref: ETD02

Essex Coalition of Disabled People, Unit 7, 'Whitelands', Terling Road, Hatfield Peverel, Essex, CM3 2AQ Tel/Fax: (01245) 382176, Minicom: (01245) 382524, Email: info@ecdpe.co.uk

Closing date for applications 25th October 2002. Interviews to be held Thursday 31st October 2002.

SKI-QUIP

Making those first tentative steps onto the slopes can be pretty nerve racking, so to help build your confidence right from the start, here's a great chance to get yourself noticed for all the right reasons! We've teamed up with leading snow sports retailer Snow + Rock to ensure that four lucky readers will be stepping out in style! Two men and two women will be kitted out in top name products courtesy of the store, including thermal crew neck tops and longjohns (each item worth £26.95) and funky eyewear from Sinner

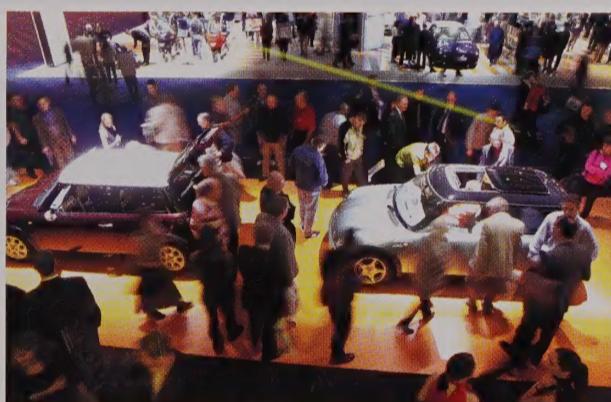
Smith (worth up to £39.95 a pair). For the chance to win, fill in the coupon provided and return it to us at our FREEPOST address. Snow + Rock stores can be found nationwide, and their newest one opens in Port Solent, Portsmouth on 12 October. For more information on Snow + Rock products and a winter catalogue, telephone 0845 1001000 or visit www.snowandrock.com

SNOW + ROCK

STAR CAR

If our preview of the British International Motor Show has whetted your appetite, why not try your luck at winning a pair of tickets to the country's biggest consumer exhibition of the year? Courtesy of the show's organiser, SMMT, we're giving away 5 pairs of tickets (worth £15 each) to the event, which is brought to us in association with *The Daily Telegraph*. The Show takes place at Birmingham's NEC from 23 October to 3 November 2002. Winners will

be treated to a breathtaking show and can look forward to highlights such as the MINI Adventure Live! There promises to be something special in store for speedboat and Formula One fans too. To make savings on tickets for the whole family, book before 14 October on www.motorshow.co.uk or on the hotline number 08709062002.



IN ASSOCIATION WITH
The Daily Telegraph

SNOW FEST

If you love skiing or would like to find out how to get started on the slopes, don't miss this year's Daily Mail Ski & Snowboard Show. Running from 25 October to 3 November at London's Olympia, the show offers everything from a great choice of holidays, expert advice and bargains from some of the biggest brands in ski and outdoor wear. For those who fancy turning a few stunts themselves, there's a full-pipe simulator that will give you a taste of the action without the danger! Courtesy of the show organiser, we've got 5 pairs of weekday tickets (worth £8 each) up for grabs this month. Complete the coupon and return it to us, or to make an advanced booking for discounted tickets, visit www.dailymailskishow.co.uk or call 08705900090.



to enter

Tick the competition circle below, add your details, and send FOR

FREE to *Disability Now*, Freepost WD4323, London N7 9BR, or you can fax it on 020 7619 7331, or e-mail the details to: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

Snow + Rock Motor Show Ski Show

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• Closing date for offers: 21.10.2002 • Entrants must be over 18 • No proof of purchase required • UK entrants only • No cash alternatives • Winners notified by post • Editor's decision is final • Special offers not open to DN staff or associates • Winners may be announced in DN • In association with Snow + Rock, The Society of Manufacturers and Motor Traders and The Daily Mail Ski and Snowboard Show, and we may use your name and address for further marketing purposes. Please tick the box if you do not wish your details to be included

DN next month



Alternative therapies like aromatherapy are one way of managing pain.

All the best news, views, jobs and offers. On sale 28 October.

PARTY CONFERENCES

What are the main political parties offering disabled people? DN reporters find out.

PAIN

Latest news on how people cope.

MOTORING

Mike Rogers checks out the new Ford trio: Fusion, Focus RS and Focus ST.

INCLUSION, NOT IGNORANCE

Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual disabled people speak out at their first ever conference.

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DN

disabilitynow

£1.80 October 2002

The heat is on

MPs say: 'Extend winter fuel payments'

Boy in blue

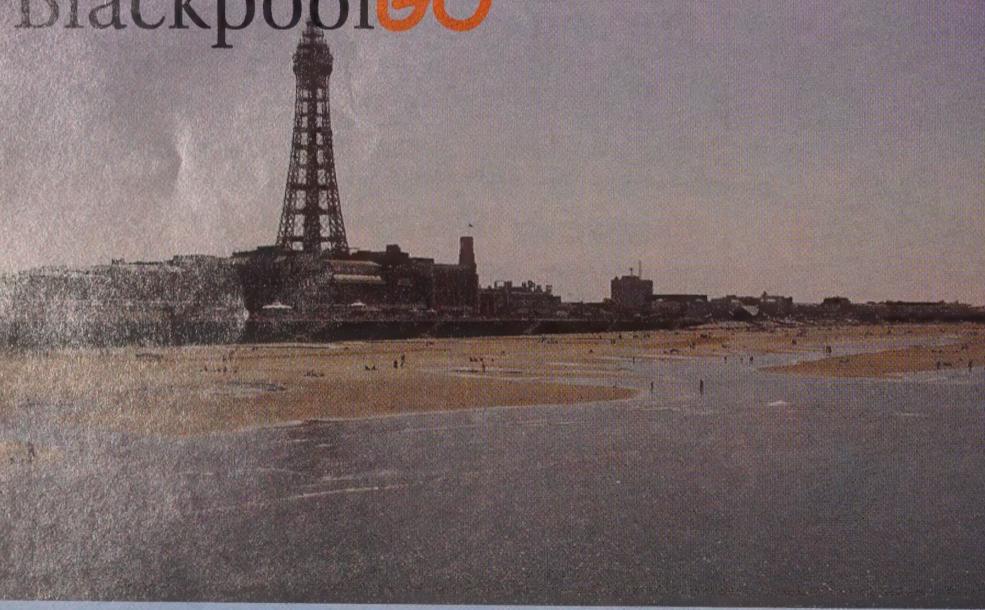
Survey launched as charities slam Blair jobs record

Skiing is believing

How to hit the slopes



Blackpool GO



Berlin GO



For info on our full range:
0845 345 0127 (local rate)
www.lewisreedgroup.co.uk
sales@lewisreedgroup.co.uk



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Now from £11,950.00*

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for info visit www.lewisreedgroup.co.uk



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